FOR ARTICLE ON CEMETERIES

H.S #39 1/17/79

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

Published occasionally by the Washtenaw Historical Society
Ann Arbor, Michigan

F. Clever Bald, Acting President

Mrs. I. William Groomes, Sec.-Treas.
1209 S. State, Ann Arbor

Lela Duff, Editor

Vol. 14, No. 4 May, 1961

CONTENTS

Josenhans Home Farm, 1866-1928. . . . . M. Alma Josenhans

"Remember, Friends, as You Pass By". . . . . Harold A. Jones

John Allen's Letters from California. . . . . Russell E. Bidlack

---

Josenhans Home Farm, 1866-1928
York Township
By M. Alma Josenhans

One of a number of short talks given in connection with the Annual Pilgrimage of the Society, June, 1960.

On the Mooreville road, a few miles from the village of that name, there is a farm which was originally owned by the Moore family, formerly of New York state. They became interested in the Michigan property in 1831, and in 1833 acquired a deed to the 160 acres. This was during the presidency of Andrew Jackson. The house, which is a Greek revival type of building, was erected by Mr. Quirk of Ypsilanti. It has 14 rooms and is presently in good condition.

My grandfather, Jonathan Josenhans, his wife Charlotte Weigle Josenhans, and their 12 children came to America on a sailing boat in October. The journey from Havre, France, to New York City took a month. The family came directly to Ann Arbor, Michigan, because they knew various Germandfamilies, particularly the Manns who greeted them on arrival. The Josenhans family lived in and around Ann Arbor for 11 years, then, hearing about the Moore property, decided to buy it in 1866. Four more children were born in America, and 10 of the 16 grew to adulthood. The one survivor is Mrs. Fredericke McBride, now living in Saline, Michigan. On July 14, 1960, she will be 99 years of age.

One remembers as a child the great excitement when one's father hired a horse and buggy from Robison's livery stable in Ann Arbor, and one was allowed to drive. In the early days there was a toll gate on Main Street near the Mann house. Here we paid a small sum to be allowed to ride on the plank road. To go

to the farm was a high adventure, not only because of the welcome from grandparents, aunts and uncles, but also because it was exciting to roam about in the fields, orchards, and woods.

The Home Farm, as it was affectionately called by the Josenhans clan, became a Mecca for relatives who came from various parts of the United States to celebrate the Fourth of July with great eclat.

Inevitably death took the beloved grandparents in 1902. The uncles and aunts carried on for a while, but in 1928 the two remaining aunts sold the farm and moved to Saline. The property has passed into good hands, and has been well kept, to the great satisfaction of our family.

"Remember, Friends, as You Pass By"
By Harold A. Jones

A paper read before the Society at its meeting in Chelsea, Sept. 29. 1960.

The challenge which brought about the research of which this paper forms a part was given a number of years ago, as the result of the purchase of a Beagle puppy, Upon the purchase of a registered dog, several folios are received giving the dog's ancestry for 10 or 12 generations, studded of course with the names of Champions and Grand Champions, and Best in Show, etc. These pedigrees are usually prepared and distributed by the American Kennel Club of New York, which maintains an exhaustive registry of all the Blue Bloods of Dogdom. In looking over these folios of my dog's ancestry, it occurred to me that it would be good to have a similar chart of my own ancestors in the hope that I too might find a few Grand Champions and Best of Show. If a dog can have a pedigree, why can't I? I knew, of course, that unfortunately there is no American Kennel Club for humans. So I found a pencil and sheet of paper and started my list of forbears.

If you will make mental notes along with me, you will appreciate the difficulties which you will encounter immediately. First the names of your father and your mother. Then the names of your grandfather on your father's side and your grandmother. You probably know her maiden name. Then your grandfather and grandmother on your mother's side. And you probably know her maiden name also. You now have three generations. Then start with the next generation. If you are unusually fortunate, you will have named yourself, your father and mother, and the four grandparents and eight great grandparents. Now the problem begins to get even more difficult when you attempt to put down the names of 32 more ancestors, and it becomes well nigh impossible to account for a total of 64 in the 6th generation. You see, this proceeds in geometrical progression and gets tremendously complicated as you go along.

You think to yourself, "Well, this shouldn't be too hard to complete." You can get all the death certificates and the marriage certificates of your ancestors and they will give the parentage of the persons concerned. You will soon be disillusioned. If you are fortunate enough to find an ancestor's name in the index in the County Clerk's office, the chances are good that the parentage is not given, and in many cases no ages either. In many cases marriage licenses were obtained in a different county from that in which the marriage

ceremony is performed and unless you know the name of the person applying for the license and the county in which it was applied for, you are lost again. You will also discover, as innumerable people have as a result of the Social Security requirements, that no birth records at all were maintained in the State of Michigan prior to 1867 or 1865. In many cases the marriage records were not kept either, and if they were they simply stated the fact of the marriage and the date, in many cases omitting the parentage and the ages of the parties to the ceremony.

Still, being hard to discourage, you think you can get all this from the State Board of Health in Lansing. So you go to Lansing and you discover that to have a search made will cost you 25¢, and if you do not know the year of the death or the birth, it will cost you 25¢ for each year of the search. It is easily possible to pay out $2.50 for a search of 10 years, and find absolutely nothing.

Then, to complicate the matter still further, you know that many Michigan families migrated to Michigan from Ohio, and prior to that from New York, and perhaps prior thereto from one of the New England states, or even a foreign country. You know that Grandfather Brown was born in Rochester, New York. So on your next vacation you go to Rochester in high hopes of getting information there. And lo and behold, you find that the State of New York maintained no such records at all prior to 1915.

All of this is very discouraging. But you don't give up easily and you think, well, if you can find the cemeteries where your grandparents are buried the chances are good that the tombstones will have inscriptions on them which will give you the dates of birth and death, as well as the names of their respective spouses, and thus a starting point. So you start out looking for cemeteries. Incidentally, death certificates did not give the place of burial prior to 1934. Here again, if you know exactly where to go you are fortunate. If you know that an ancestor was buried in Washtenaw County, but do not know just where, you are again in serious trouble.

Because of these problems and difficulties, of which I have enumerated only a few, many years ago the practice was started of making copies of the inscriptions in cemeteries throughout the Midwest and the Eastern states in order to provide a permanent record of place of burial and to afford an easy place of reference as to kinship, dates, and other genealogical data. Cemetery inscriptions are most useful tools of the genealogist. A great many of the cemeteries in the east have been done and copies are available. Likewise, numerous cemeteries have been done in Michigan by the Daughters of the American Revolution, with the thought in mind of honoring members of that Society. A former state officer of the D.A.R., Mrs. May R. Howlett, of Pontiac, Michigan, has made a number of records of cemetery inscriptions in western Washtenaw County which are available in the Burton Collection of the Detroit Public Library. She has copied Stockbridge, Unadilla, Waterloo, Williamston, and a number of others.

Therefore, a number of years ago, I decided to copy the inscriptions in the other cemeteries in the western part of Washtenaw County, as an aid to the genealogist and to perpetuate the historical data thereby obtainable. First of all, an examination was made in the indexes in the Burton Collection in Detroit and an examination of the work previously done. Most of the transcriptions were made in the early 1920's, and it was felt that the work which had already been done might well be brought up to date, and omitted cemeteries might be studied.

Local funeral directors were able to supply the names and locations of only about 8 cemeteries in this area. The very excellent County map prepared by the Washtenaw County Road Commission furnished the locations of many more. As a result, a list has been made of the cemeteries in the 5 western townships of Lyndon, Sylvan, Lima, Freedom, and Sharon. Other cemeteries of interest in Jackson and Livingston Counties and in Dexter Township were noted. The complete list which is of interest to people in the Chelsea Community has the names of 32.

If you will bear with me for a moment, I will enumerate these for the sake of the record. In Jackson County, very close to the County line, will be found Mount Hope Cemetery of Waterloo, and the North Waterloo Cemetery. In Livingston County, the old cemetery of Unadilla - sometimes called the Base Line Cemetery - is of interest. There are two in Lyndon Township, the Collins Cemetery and the John Moore Burying Ground. In Sylvan Township, there are 8 cemeteries: one on Loveland Rd., the Maple Grove Cemetery of Sylvan Center; the Mount Olivet Cemetery and the Oak Grove Cemetery, both of Chelsea; the Pierce Family Cemetery in Chelsea; the Salem Grove Cemetery on Notten Rd.; the old St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, also known as Mount Calvary, on Bush Rd.; and the oldest cemetery in Sylvan Township, the Vermont Cemetery on M 92, about a mile south of US 12. In Lima Township there are 3: the Clements Cemetery, also known as the Parker Cemetery; the Jerusalem Cemetery, sometimes called the Porter Cemetery; and the old Lima Center or Easton Cemetery. In Sharon Township there are 5: the North Sharon or Raymond Cemetery; one at Sharon Center; one on the Sharon Hollow Rd. at the south end of the township; the Sharon Lutheran Cemetery; and the Rowe Corners Cemetery. In Freedom Township there are 7: the Bethel Church Cemetery; one on Ellsworth Rd. near Haab Rd.; the old Freedom Township Cemetery on Ellsworth Rd.; the so-called Rogers Corners Cemetery; an old abandoned cemetery on Schneider Rd. recently copied by Mrs. Geo. O. Ross of Ann Arbor; the St. John's or Mt. Hope Cemetery; and an old cemetery on Waters Rd. In Dexter Township there are 4 of interest to persons residing in this area. There is an old Catholic cemetery at Dexter Town Hall and Quigley Roads; the large Forest Lawn Cemetery in Dexter; the Four-Mile Lake Cemetery on N. Lima Center Rd.; and the North Lake Cemetery on Riker Rd.

Of these 32, inscriptions have been copied and are available in either the Chelsea Public Library or the Burton Collection in Detroit, for 27. The largest, with the possible exception of Forest Lawn in Dexter, is the Oak Grove Cemetery in Chelsea, which has only recently been tabulated. A total of 2,550 inscriptions have been copied by Miss Virginia Everham, of the Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, and indexed and annotated by your speaker. I shall not belabor you with the details since, of course, they are available here in the Chelsea Public Library or in the Burton Collection of Detroit.

However, I would like to call your attention to things of interest in a few of the better known ones. If you are interested in a tour of them, I refer you to the map prepared by the Washtenaw County Road Commission for precise locations. I think, and hope, that you will agree that the most beautiful and best maintained of the smaller cemeteries is the Mount Hope Cemetery in Waterloo Township, just over the county line in Jackson County. It is well designed with many beautiful old trees. This cemetery is not shown on the Washtenaw Co. Road Map, but it is not hard to find, on the north side of Loveland Rd., about a quarter of a mile east of the Clear Lake-Waterloo Rd., in Section 36 of Waterloo Township. Its earliest inscription is for Mariett Gorton, wife of Aaron T. Gorton, who died Nov. 21, 1838. Here are found many pioneers of Lyndon Township, among them members of the Bush family, the Collins family,

the Croman, Gorton, Riethmiller, Howlett, Hubbard, and Runciman families, to name only a few. There is one of the most unusual monuments that I have seen, for the Beeman family, in the form of a large upright tree trunk.

Speaking of unusual monuments, if you are ever in Chautauqua, New York, I would like to have you walk through the cemetery adjoining the Chautauqua grounds, where you will find a highly polished, huge marble ball. It is a perfect sphere, and the headstones are also perfect spheres about the size of bowling balls. My memory is that there are 5 or 6 of them. What makes the spherical stones even more striking is the fact that directly across from them is an equally large, highly polished cube, and the headstones in connection with it are smaller cubes about a foot square. I am very curious to know the background for the spheres and the cubes; I am sure there must be a story there.

Leaving the finest small cemetery (in your speaker's opinion), I think that the poorest maintained cemetery is at the SW corner of Dexter Town Hall Rd. and Quigley Rd. The last time I visited there it was an almost impenetrable thicket of brush, high weeds and burrs, and many of the stones have broken and fallen to the ground. It is very old, as there are inscriptions in the early 1840's.

The oldest inscription which I have found in the 32 cemeteries is in the Clements or Parker Cemetery at the intersection of US 12 and Parker Rd., being that of Charlotte Clements, daughter of Samuel and Catherine Clements, who died September 15, 1827 - aged 12 years, 7 months and 3 days. This date goes back to the very early settlement of this part of the county. Here will be found many members of the Clements family and the Parker family, as well as the Mitchells and the progenitors of the Dancer family. The Dancers are, of course, well known for their activities in banking and merchandising in the Chelsea and Stockbridge communities.

Passing briefly to the Jerusalem Cemetery, at the intersection of Fletcher and Sager Roads in Lima Township, will be found Ira Cushman and his wife. Ira Cushman is a direct descendant of Elder Robert Cushman, one of the early organizers of the Pilgrim Colony, who left England on the Speedwell, sailing with the Mayflower, but whose ship was compelled to return to England. Elder Cushman later set out for Plymouth again in 1621, where he delivered a sermon to the Pilgrims on Dec. 12, 1621. This sermon was the first one in America to be printed. The earliest inscription in Jerusalem Cemetery is that of Eli T. Danielson, who died July 8, 1834.

Another old and interesting cemetery is the Lima Center or Easton Cemetery, situated approximately 3½ miles east of Chelsea on US 12. It is on a small hill about 600 ft. north of the highway. I notice that the new road is being opened directly north of it, and perhaps after the road is in use it will be more easily reached. At present it is necessary to drive through a lane on the edge of a field, which presents driving difficulties. In this graveyard will be found many early 1830 inscriptions. It takes its alternate name from the many members of the Easton family who are buried there. You will also find the early members of the Freer family, which is descended from the early French Huguenots of New Jersey. No doubt Freer Rd. was named for this family. Here, too, are Beaches, General Asa Williams, Wards and Westfalls. You will also find Sophia Cushman Boyd who died July 2, 1855. She also is a descendant of Elder Robert Cushman, and she is reported to be, in addition, a descendant of John Alden of Plymouth Colony fame. A few years ago she was honored by a special marker placed on her grave by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

A pilgrimage to the Collins cemetery in Lyndon Township is well worth the trip. This is a small private cemetery located on Roepcke Rd., very close to the Livingston County line. It is about 700 feet north of the road and can be reached only by driving up a small ungraveled lane. Being hard to find, the entrance is marked by small arrows. It is beautifully treed. Here will be found Judson Collins, who is famous for being a member of the first Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church to China. His biography is well known and he has been honored on many occasions. A remarkable and truly dedicated young man, he died when only 30 years of age. His tombstone is unusual in that it has been repolished and the cutting emphasized by the use of pigment. His epitaph: "He being dead, yet speaketh. Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

The oldest cemetery in Sylvan Township is known as the Vermont Cemetery and is located at the NE corner of the intersection of the Chelsea-Manchester Rd. and Jerusalem Rd., approximately 1 mile south of US 12. The land was donated in 1835 by Aaron Lawrence, and it has been described in Vol. XXIII of "Vermont History" magazine, published in 1955. It derives its name from the fact that the pioneers of the area came from the State of Vermont. In this cemetery will be found members of the Davis, Fenn, Lawrence, Spaulding, Wines, and Everett families, to name only a few. The victim of the first murder in Sylvan Township, which, incidentally, was never solved,- John C. Depew - is buried here. He was a well-to-do business man, and was beaten to death a short distance west of Chelsea. The history of the graveyard indicates that it was opened to provide for the burial of Mary Brown Smith, wife of Jesse C. Smith, who died June 24, 1835. It is stated that hers was the first burial here. However, there is an inscription for Sarah Jane Godfrey, who died Sept. 14, 1834, aged 12 years, 4 months, 22 days.

St. Mary's Cemetery, which is also known as Mount Calvary, is the oldest Catholic cemetery in Sylvan Township. It is on a small hill in Section 24 of Sylvan Township, a short distance north of the Mill Lake Camp entrance, on the east side of the road. The broken and fallen stones have been repaired, and it is now being kept in very fine condition. Here will be found the Cassidys, for whom presumably Cassidy Lake is named, the Conlans, early members of the Gorman family, the Howes, the Looneys, the Walshes, early members of the McKune and the Savage families, and one early forbear of the Young family. It is sometimes called the Irish Cemetery, since there are so many inscriptions indicating birth in County Tipperary, County Meath, County Cork, etc. The most impressive monument is that for the Right Rev. Monsignor James Savage, who was Pastor of Most Holy Trinity Church, Detroit. He died Dec. 10, 1927. It is stated that his grave is in the exact location of the altar in the old church where James worshipped as a boy. He was a beloved and honored priest of his church, and accounts of his funeral indicate that it was most impressive and attended by many Catholic dignitaries in this area. The earliest legible stone in thie cemetery is that of Rosa O'Neil, daughter of Thomas and Susannah O'Neil, who died Dec. 15, 1842, aged 4 months and 15 days. The next oldest is that of Rosa's mother, who died Oct. 31, 1844.

The largest Catholic cemetery is Mount Olivet Cemetery, situated at the east boundary of Oak Grove Cemetery. It was established in the spring of 1889, the first burial there being that of Mrs. Henry Lammers, on April 26, 1889. It is recorded that a number of persons were removed from the old St. Mary's Cemetery to a final resting place in Mount Olivet. Here are buried the Cassidys, Fenns, Fosters, Gormans, Hindalangs, Merkels, Staffans, Stapishes, and Webers. It is said that the Jacob Hindalang who is buried here is a direct descendant of one of the personal body guards of George Washington. Here also

will be found Catherine McKune, who died in 1948, and who was the generous donor of this building to the Library Association; also Herbert J. McKune, a member of the Marine Corps, who died in Europe on Oct. 4, 1918. It is for him that the Chelsea American Legion Post is named.

As stated at the beginning of this paper, the largest cemetery in this area is Oak Grove, situated in Section 7 of Lima Township, and can be entered at the east end of Middle St. in Chelsea. The Oak Grove Cemetery Association was established in Sept., 1860, and it is appropriate that here tonight we take notice of the centennial of this organization, It is regrettable that time permits only very brief recollection of the early community leaders buried here.

The men most closely associated with the founding of Chelsea are both here: Elisha Congdon and his brother, James Congdon. Elisha is honored with a large shaft in the center of the cemetery giving the date of his death as May 20, 1867. His first wife was Mary A. Sterry, who died in Norwich, Conn., Aug. 5, 1825. She was a daughter of Consider Sterry, a remarkable man in the early history of Norwich. Elisha's monument is likewise inscribed with the name of his second wife, Eloiza Standish, who died March 24, 1866. The monument also carries the name of Sarah E. Standish, a sister of Eloiza, who died Oct. 30, 1877. Both are direct descendants of Miles Standish. This gives the Village of Chelsea the unique distinction of having had descendants of both John Alden and Miles Standish living here.

Members of the Pierce family are here, this family being one of the earliest to settle in the area. In fact, the old village of Pierceville was established by them. Members of this family are descendants of Lt. Nathan Pierce who was active in the Revolutionary War, serving at one time in Mass. under Col. Seth Warner, and with Gen. Richard Montgomery at his defeat in the assault on Quebec. A descendant of Nathan Pierce donated the land for Pierce Park which you passed on your entrance into Chelsea.

You will also find in the center of the cemetery many members of the Taylor family, who were leaders in the community during their lifetime. There is a large granite flat vault adjacent to the Taylor lot in honor of Orla Benedict Taylor, who died Dec. 31, 1945. He was famous as a world traveler and lecturer, and was decorated by the Government of France for his studies of the life of Napoleon. He was also honored by the University of Michigan for gifts to the University. His brilliance is attested by the Phi Beta Kappa insignia engraved on the vault. His father, James Taylor, is buried nearby. An amusing anecdote is told about him. It seems that James was crossing the Michigan Central Railroad track and narrowly missed being struck by a train. When asked if he had not heard the warning bells ringing before he started across, James said, "Certainly I heard the bells. They were making so much noise that I couldn't hear the train coming." So you know from whom Orla inherited the brilliance to merit his Phi Beta Kappa key!

In this cemetery will be found members of the George P. Glazier family. A son, Frank P. Glazier, should be remembered for his many munificent gifts to the community. One not always remembered is the land and central building for the Methodist Home. This building is named for Frank P. Glazier's mother, Emily Glazier.

In concluding, I would call your attention to the North Lake Cemetery, established in 1841, on Riker Rd. just south of North Territotial Rd., in Dexter Township, which has many members of the Glenn family resting there. Charles Glenn, in 1836, was the organizer of the Methodist Church in the home of John Glenn, and worshippers came from many miles around to attend classes.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the Honorable Samuel Wm. Dexter, for whom the village of Dexter is named. He was a descendant of one of Boston's leading families. He rests in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Dexter, and of course is well known as the first Judge of Washtenaw County, appointed by Gov. Lewis Cass, although he was not an attorney. He also published the first newspaper in Dexter, and his beautiful home, Gordon Hall, named for his mother, was acquired not long ago by the University of Michigan. You will find his grave marked by a very modest stone in the center of the west part of Forest Lawn.

I have been asked many times whether I have found any humorous epitaphs. I can answer categorically, I have found none. There are many moving epitaphs, however, and I shall read a few of my favorites. The title of this paper is taken from a well-known one, quite commonly used, which I first saw in an 18th century cemetery at East Poultney, Vermont.

"Remember, friends, as you pass by,
As you are now, so once was I;
As I am now you soon shall be.
Prepare for death and follow me!"

"A tender wife, a mother dear,
A much lamented friend is here."

(Numerous variations of the above, for instance:)
"A faithful friend, a daughter dear,
A lovely sister slumbers here."

"We want but little here below
Nor want that little long."

"Who well improves life's short stay
Will scarce regret its setting ray."

"My dear husband, I erect this in memory of you,
And I hope it will be pleasing to God and to you."

(This, from the Pierce Family Cemetery, is I think my favorite:)
"O what is human life?
How like the dial's slow moving shade
Day after day slides from us unperceived.
Too subtle is the movement to be seen,
Yet soon the hour is up and all is gone."

JOHN ALLEN'S LETTERS FROM CALIFORNIA

Edited, with an introduction, by

Russell E. Bidlack

(Prof. Bidlack spoke before the Washtenaw Historical Society on "Recent Research on John Allen" at its meeting of March 3, 1961.)

No chapter in American history is more filled with the spectacular than is that which records the headlong rush to California beginning in 1849. Dominated by man's greedy quest for riches, the Gold Rush encompassed all the elements of drama and romance: sudden wealth and sudden poverty, the buffalo chase and the Indian raid, birth, marriage and death, murder and the justice of Judge Lynch, the unmarked grave, mutiny and stampede, the fever of the Tropics and the thirst of the desert. It fired the imagination of the restless and gave hope to the desperate. It peopled the West and bridged a continent. The words "Argonauts" and "Golden Fleece" took on new meaning, and "Forty-Niner" was added to the language.

The literature of the Gold Rush is voluminous, and it increases yearly. It had its inception in the letters of the Forty-Niners published in the weekly newspapers back home, and it has run the full gamut to the scholarly monograph and academic dissertation. Dozens of diaries kept by the gold-seekers have been published along with their authors' memoirs and autobiographies. Novels and plays, scores of movies and countless T.V. programs have told the story of the great migration westward. No one, however, has told the story quite so well as did the Argonauts themselves in their letters home.

The Forty-Niners were but the vanguard of the gold-seekers. Whereas some fifty thousand Americans migrated to California in 1849, nearly one hundred thousand set out in 1850, and even greater numbers went in 1851 and 1852. Although by 1853 the gold fever had begun to slacken, other forces were developing which would continue to pull people westward for another century.

Michigan, like every other state, was profoundly affected by the Gold Rush. Scarcely a village failed to send at least one of its citizens to the "diggings," and from such communities as Albion, Marshall, Battle Creek, and Monroe, whole companies of gold-seekers set out for the New El Dorado. Early in 1852, the editor of the Ann Arbor Argus estimated that six thousand persons had left Michigan for the gold fields during the previous year, taking nearly two and one half million dollars out of the state.

No Michigan community was more infected with the gold fever than was the town of Ann Arbor. Twelve of its citizens left for California in 1849, twice that number in 1850, and still larger numbers in 1851 and 1852. Among the Forty-Niners were some of the leading townsmen: George Corselius, Dr. Caleb Ormsby, D. T. McCollum, and Dr. Thomas Blackwood. It was in 1850, however, that the town's best-known citizen, its founder, departed for the "diggings." His name was John Allen--a name familiar to every Ann Arborite who has an interest in his town's history.

Of the numerous letters written home by Ann Arbor's gold-seekers, none are of greater historical value than those by John Allen. While most of the Gold

Rush letters were private, addressed to a wife, parent, or friend, and were largely restricted to personal matters, Allen's letters were written with the expectation that they would be printed in a local paper. They were intended to be informative and to serve as a guide for later emigrants to California. Shortly before his departure, Allen wrote to his old friend, Lucius Lyon: "You may expect to hear from me, should I be permitted to arrive there in safety, as I shall write to my friends, a more full & detailed account of all matters interesting to those here, than I have yet seen from any one."[1]

Whereas the average age of the California gold-seeker was twenty-five, John Allen was in his fifty-fourth year when he began his search for the Golden Fleece. His health was robust, however, and he still possessed that youthful enthusiasm and love of adventure which had impelled him a quarter century earlier to abandon his home in Virginia and to establish a town in the wilds of Michigan. In fact, the "Gold Fever" which victimized Allen in 1850 was but a reinfection of the "Western Fever" which had gripped him in 1823.

John Allen was born in Augusta County, Virginia, on May 17, 1796, and died near San Francisco on March 11, 1851. Of Scotch-Irish ancestry, he came from one of the old Augusta County families, his great-grandfather, the first James Allen, having been a resident of the county as early as 1742. The Allens were farmers with modest land holdings and a few slaves, not in a class with the great plantation owners of the Old South, but possessed of the same pride in family and good breeding as the most aristocratic Virginians.

When he was nineteen, John Allen had married seventeen-year-old Mary Crawford. Less than four years later, Mary died leaving John with two small children, James C. and Elizabeth. On June 7, 1821, he had married a widow his own age, Mrs. Ann Isabella (Barry) McCue. On May 10, 1823, a daughter, whom they called Sarah Ann, was born to John and Ann.

According to family tradition, the McCues strongly disapproved of Ann's marriage to John Allen, even though the two families were related. Having been left an orphan at the age of three, Ann had inherited a substantial estate and had been reared and educated by wealthy relatives. Furthermore, her first husband, Dr. William McCue, a graduate of Washington College and the Philadelphia Medical School, had been a highly successful physician in Lexington, Virginia. While John Allen was credited on the 1820 census with the ownership of eight slaves and Augusta County records reveal that he owned some five hundred acres of land on Middle River, he, like his father, was greatly in debt. John Allen was considered by the McCues to be Ann's inferior, not only financially, but also from the point of view of education and social status. Perhaps the McCues also realized that he would not long be content to remain in Augusta County and that there would be problems with regard to Ann's sons by her first marriage. Furthermore, no two people were more different in personality and outlook upon life than John Allen and Ann McCue. Whereas Ann was deeply religious, lacking in a sense of humor, and tended to be melancholy, John did not join a church until late in life and was by nature gay and carefree. Ann placed great importance on economic security and the niceties of life, while John was a born speculator and adventurer. Ann loved the South and its traditions, whereas John gradually rebelled against those same traditions and came to oppose one of the South's basic institutions--slavery. Shortly after settling in Michigan, John Allen wrote to his Aunt Jane Trimble: "Oh how great a curse are we delivered from, the thoughts of which at all times constrain me to bless and praise the disposer of all events, for thus delivering us, by a strong hand, from a land of oppression and tyrany, and placing us in a land of liberty and peace, where the sweat, and groans, and blood, of the Afflicted Sons and Daughters of Affrica, shall never rise in Judgement to condemn us."[2]

A degree of mystery surrounds John Allen's departure from Augusta County. According to a letter written in 1888 by a nephew of his wife, he purchased "a considerable lot of cattle" in the autumn of 1823 and took them to market in Baltimore. Months passed without further word from him, and "the impression became a general one that he had been assassinated."[3] Actually John Allen had gone from Baltimore to Buffalo, there to look into the feasibility of investing his cattle money in government land. At some point, perhaps after discussing his plan with Buffalo merchants and speculators, Allen hit upon the idea of establishing a town somewhere in the west. By dividing a portion of his tract into town lots, he envisioned a quick profit and a continuing opportunity for investment. Like others before and after him, Allen began playing the hazardous game of land speculation. He never returned to Virginia.

Allen spent the months of November and December in Buffalo. Then, early in January, 1824, still undecided as to where he should build his town, he traveled the land route through Canada to Detroit. In Detroit, Allen met a man from Genesee County, New York, Elisha Walker Rumsey, who, like himself, was interested in buying government land in a promising area.[4] They decided to combine their capital and to establish a town in which the two of them would be proprietors. From subsequent developments, however, there can be little doubt but that Allen was the leader in the enterprise.

After discussing their plans with Detroit merchants and politicians, Allen and Rumsey became convinced that the best opportunities for land investment were to be found in Michigan Territory. One year earlier, in 1822, the county of Washtenaw had been created, and in the spring of 1823 Benjamin Woodruff had begun a settlement within the new county near the present site of Ypsilanti which he called Woodruff's Grove. Allen and Rumsey set out to explore the new county, hoping to find a spot where fertile soil, natural clearings, access to water power and transportation, and proximity to the growing commercial center of Detroit would attract settlers and facilitate rapid improvement. They headed first for Woodruff's Grove.

One of the pioneers who had joined Woodruff in his new settlement was John Bryan, who recalled in later years that on February 1, 1824, he had started walking from his cabin to Detroit, "through an unbroken snow six inches deep."

> When about half way through the woods, I met two men in a one-horse sleigh. After enquiring if I thought they could reach the settlement before dark, they said they were going to find a place for a future home, and asked many questions about the country. They proved to be Messrs. Allen and Rumsey, who afterwards were the founders of Ann Arbor.[5]

The extent to which Allen and Rumsey explored before choosing the site for their town is not known, but by February 12 they were back in Detroit where they registered their claims with the Land Office. Allen purchased 480 acres and Rumsey purchased 160 acres in a burr oak plain along the Huron River some ten miles west of Woodruff's Grove. Each paid in cash at the rate of $1.25 per acre, Allen $600 and Rumsey $200. They chose their site well, for the city of Ann Arbor was destined to grow from this beginning.

Once Allen and Rumsey had registered their claims, they lost little time in promoting their settlement. On February 14, Governor Cass, probably upon the urging of Allen and Rumsey, appointed seven commissioners to explore the county of Washtenaw "with a view to the establishment of the county-seat thereof."

John Bryan recalled his meeting these commissioners on February 28 as he was walking back to Woodruff's Grove from Detroit:

> They were on horseback; all were dressed in Indian blanket overcoats, and had their pantaloons seated and faced down in front with buckskin. Each had a tin cup. On enquiring "What news?" James McCloskey, Esq., who knew me, replied that they had located the county seat on land recently purchased by Allen and Rumsey, about 10 miles up the Huron from our settlement.[6]

In their report to Governor Cass, dated March 6, 1824, the Commissioners noted that different sites for the county seat had been proposed to them "by individuals interested in the county," but that after making "a comparison of the local as well as the relative advantages which each possessed," they had chosen a spot on "the south bank of the Huron of Lake Erie . . . upon lands owned by Allen and Rumsey, Esquires." The Commissioners added: "Messrs. Allen & Rumsey, who but a few weeks since, made their purchase, and who have since become the proprietors of the county-seat, have already, under almost every disadvantage, erected a good framed [sic] house, are commencing large improvements, and have contributed liberally for the benefit of the public."[7]

The selection of their settlement as the county seat assured Allen and Rumsey of success in their endeavor, but they had to pay a price for their good fortune. The Commissioners stipulated that "Allen & Rumsey contribute to the county in cash, in labor and materials, towards the erection of a court house and gaol, and in the erection of a substantial bridge over the Huron, the amount of one thousand dollars; and that they further give to the county such lots and parcels of ground, as the undersigned have deemed necessary for public uses."

Much has been written about the manner in which Allen and Rumsey chose "Ann Arbor" as the name for their settlement. Since the name was not mentioned by the Commissioners in their report, it would appear that it was chosen sometime after March 6. The earliest known document in which the name appears is the plat of the village which Allen and Rumsey arranged to have recorded by the Wayne County Register of Deeds on May 25, 1824 (Liber 7, pp. 82-83). Here the name was written as "Annarbour." There can be little doubt but that Allen and Rumsey chose the name "Ann" because Allen's wife bore the name and because it was also Mrs. Rumsey's middle name. According to John Geddes, who came to Ann Arbor in July, 1824, the settlement was first called "Ann's Arbour," but the possessive form was dropped at the time the plat was recorded.[8] No contemporary explanation for the choice of the word "Arbour" has been found. (Allen himself always spelled it "Arbour.") A number of writers have assumed that there must have been an arbor of wild grape vines that served as a kind of shelter for Allen and the Rumseys while they built their cabins. The word "arbour," however, was commonly used in the nineteenth century simply to describe a grove or shady spot. The present writer is convinced that the burr oak opening chosen as the town's site, in which giant oaks stood some distance from one another, reminded the proprietors of a pleasant grove.

Mrs. George C. Lathrop, a friend of the Rumseys in New York, visited Ann Arbor in 1828 and recalled many years later: "That city derived its name on account of the noble aspects of the original site of the village which was a burr oak opening resembling an arbor, laid out and cultivated by the hand of nature."[9]

When William A. Moseley wrote from Buffalo on April 29, 1824, in reply to a letter from Allen written during the previous February, Moseley referred to Allen's settlement as "Allensville." On May 24, 1824, another of Allen's Buffalo friends, Abner Bryant, replying to a letter received from Allen on the same day, addressed his letter as follows: "Care of Col° R. Smith, Detroit, Mr. John Allen, Anapolis, M. Territory." The use of "Allensville" and "Anapolis" by these two correspondents, may suggest that Allen considered more than one name for his village.

On June 1, 1824, Allen and Rumsey prepared an advertisement which appeared regularly in the Detroit Gazette throughout the summer. It read as follows:

TO THE PUBLIC

The subscribers invite the attention of EMIGRANTS, particularly of Mechanics and Artisans, to the village of

ANN-ARBOUR

The County-seat of the County of Washtenaw, pleasantly located on the Lower Huron.

Ann-Arbour is in the heart of a rich and rapidly populating country, distant about thirty miles from Detroit. The village has been laid out into convenient lots, and the proprietors now offer them for sale on the most liberal terms, to persons desirous of permanently locating.

A map of the village may be seen at the office of the Register of Wayne County in Detroit, or by application to the subscribers, at Ann-Arbour. It is expected that a road, to run direct from the county-seat to Detroit, will be surveyed and laid out in the course of the summer.

The subscribers pledge themselves to facilitate, as far as possible, the views of emigrants and others, who may visit the county, for the purpose of locating.

JOHN ALLEN
ELISHA W. RUMSEY, Proprietors.[10]

The rapidity with which settlers came to Ann Arbor exceeded even the most sanguine hopes of John Allen. The Detroit Gazette reported on July 30, 1824, that, whereas a year earlier there had been but nine persons living in all of Washtenaw County, the Fourth of July had been celebrated in 1824 at Ann Arbor, called "the lower settlement," by some seventy-nine persons. On September 18, John Allen reported to John R. Williams: "Our little village is increasing Rapidly--My Saw Mill will go into operation in a few weeks."[11] On February 20, 1825, Allen reported to his aunt:

> It is now twelve months since I settled here when there was not an inhabitant within ten miles,--how different is the scene now in the village and neighbourhood; there is between thirty and forty families many of whom are of the finest respectability, roads have been opened in various directions, mills of every kind started, tradesmen putting their shops in operation, by way of preparation for the flood of emigration that is expected next summer, farmers busily engaged in fenceing farms which nature has provided already clear for them--in short it already wears the appearance of an old settled country, except for the want of Houses and Barns.[12]

In October, 1824, John Allen's wife and three children, along with his parents and an unmarried brother, arrived from Virginia. Joining her husband in Michigan was not the happy occasion for Ann Allen that it might have been, for she had been

forced to leave behind her own two sons, John and Thomas McCue. The boys' guardians, brothers of Ann's first husband, had decreed that they should not be subjected to the perils of the frontier. Henceforth, the loyalties of Ann Allen would be torn between her restless husband in Michigan and her fatherless sons in Virginia.

An Ann Arbor historian, Lorenzo Davis, who had known Allen personally, wrote of him in 1884: "John Allen was physically a very grand specimen of a man. He was over six feet tall and well proportioned. He was well educated; not a classical scholar, but a very good English scholar, and very apt in acquiring the elements of science and had a happy faculty of properly appropriating what he possessed."[13]

That John Allen valued education is evident from the fact that in September, 1825, a Miss Monroe began conducting a primary school in a log schoolhouse built by Allen on his own property on the northwest corner of what are now Main and Ann Streets. It was in this building also that the First Presbyterian Church was organized in 1826. (Although his wife and parents became charter members of this church, Allen himself never joined.) In 1829, two brothers named Merrill opened a "select school" for the instruction of older children. Later called the Ann Arbor Academy, this school attracted scholars from as far away as Detroit, including the son of William Woodbridge, a prosperous lawyer and future Michigan governor. A letter from Woodbridge to Allen dated October 16, 1830, indicates that Allen was the chief mover in the organization and administration of the Academy. In 1833, Allen organized the Manual Labor School for the benefit of children whose parents lacked the financial resources necessary for private education. In a letter to his son dated June 12, 1836, Allen observed:

> Every man takes his stand in Society, just where his mind & manners entitle him. If you ever desire, or expect, to move in the first circle with credit to yourself, you will have to prepare for it. . . . I feel proud to say, that although you have had no opportunities of improvement, and but little education, you are able to appear well. Yet you must not think that you are fully adequate to sustain yourself, in respectable and well bred company creditably. To do this you must have a mind well stored with information on a variety of subjects, and possess, what is termed, polished manners. Literature with awkwardness or Riches with Vulgarity--never will enable its possessor to move in good Society--I mean polished Society. How rare in Michigan are young men of good breeding.[14]

Space prohibits more than a glance at John Allen's interesting career in Michigan. Suffice it to say that, with a boldness that startled his contemporaries, he set out to make his fortune, and for a decade he succeeded beyond his dreams. A traveler from Germany, Karl Neidhard, who visited Ann Arbor during the summer of 1834, wrote:

> Six years ago he [John Allen] had considerably less than nothing. Now he lives like a prince in a magnificent house and his prosperity increases daily. No wonder! The half-acre building lots which cost him seventy-five cents he is now selling for several hundred dollars.[15]

By 1835, John Allen had long since settled his Virginia debts and was the owner of stores and mills, houses and lots, fine horses and handsome carriages, as well as many thousands of acres of Michigan land; he had founded his town;

he had occupied several political offices, had published a newspaper, and had studied for and been admitted to the Michigan bar. He held stock in various companies, including the Detroit and St. Joseph Rail Road; his counsel was sought on financial matters, and investors entrusted him with thousands of dollars. (For example, one Edward Brooks on July 28, 1836, "furnished said Allen with ten thousand dollars in Money, to be used in land speculation.")[16] In 1836, Allen and two capitalists from Amherst, Massachusetts, formed "the Richmond Company," the purpose of which was to build a large sawmill on a tract of 2240 acres in Allegan County and to lay out a city, to be called Richmond, around it. Allen directed the entire project and met with such initial success that early in 1837 a contract was drawn up to control the distribution of the company's profits when they should pass the $100,000 mark.[17]

Like other speculators, John Allen not only held the notes of numerous business associates, but was himself indebted to many eastern creditors. "There are a number of indentures with New York merchants running into thousands of dollars," John's mother confided to her granddaughter, Elizabeth Allen, on July 22, 1836.[18] In the same letter, old Mrs. Allen complained of "hard times" in Ann Arbor, and she expressed concern that her son had become too deeply embroiled in high finance. Her fears were well founded, for many of his assets were merely paper assets.

Late in 1836, John Allen moved with his wife and daughter, Sarah, to New York City where he thought he could better direct his financial affairs. He left his son, James C. Allen, and daughter, Elizabeth, in Ann Arbor under the watchful eye of their grandmother. Upon arriving in New York, Allen purchased a "3 story brick dwelling house in Broadway" for $16,000 and opened an office at 44 Wall Street.[19] Shortly after his arrival in New York, Allen recognized the signs of an approaching commercial crisis and formed the American Exchange Company in an attempt to dispose of his western land. His company soon failed, however, and he was forced to stand by as a helpless spectator while his little financial empire crumbled around him. Like thousands of other speculators, he fell victim of the Panic of 1837.

For the second time in his life, John Allen found himself buried in debt. Writing to William Woodbridge on July 16, 1838, he confessed: "In Money Matters,--to use a common saying, 'I am used up'."[20] In a letter to her brother also written on July 16, Elizabeth Allen, who had joined her father in New York, stated: "I am as economical as possible these hard times--Pa has given me several handsome books which he took for a debt. . . . Pa is well, he has but little business to attend to."[21]

Although unable to pay his just debts and indirectly responsible for the financial ruin of several of his friends, John Allen returned to Ann Arbor and faced his creditors. His fellow-townsmen welcomed him, recognizing that he, like nearly every other Michigan investor, had simply misjudged the times and been carried away by a speculative bubble. On February 9, 1839, again writing to Woodbridge, Allen stated candidly: "I am at present, unable to raise Ten dollars. . . . I would have been in Detroit several days ago, had I possessed the means of paying expenses &c."[22]

The 1840's were years of privation and hardship for the Allen family. "I am poor and needy," Ann Allen complained to her son, Thomas McCue, on June 9, 1841. "I cannot get the cheapest calico dress without someone gives me the means to purchase it."[23] On August 15, 1842, she wrote: "The times are excessive hard with us; we live by the strictest economy--we keep no servant, do our own work, make our wants but few."[24]

Although his wife, humiliated and discouraged, could see little hope for their economic improvement, John Allen, a born optimist, was confident that he could regain his losses. Having once been rich, he was determined to be so again, and he entertained various schemes for starting a new life. He and Jonathan F. Stratton, an associate in the ill-fated Richmond venture, even considered establishing a colony on the West Coast, but their lack of capital thwarted the plan. He turned to the practice of law, forming a partnership with John N. Gott, but soon found that a lawyer's fees are difficult to collect during a depression. "Mr. Allen I think will leave for St Louis in Nov.," Ann reported to her son in 1842, "he wants to get another new home; how pleased I should be, if he was of a contented disposition. I know he could make a living here if that was all the object."[25]

But John Allen was not "of a contented disposition," and there was nothing Ann could do to change him. Mary H. Clark, a resident of Ann Arbor and well acquainted with the Allens, wrote in 1852 of John: "The roving habits of his early life, like those of Daniel Boone, were in the way of his living contented in a settlement that could no longer be termed 'wild,' when lands further west were yet unexplored."[26]

Two events occurred in the life of John Allen in 1844 which provided new outlets for his restless energy--one was his election as a Democrat to represent the Second District in the Michigan Senate, and the other was his discovery of the religious teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg.[27] From 1845 until 1848, Allen was embroiled in politics, attacking, among other things, the whole judicial system of the state. Although many of the reforms which he strove to introduce into Michigan's court system either failed to become law or were later repealed, they did result in the destruction of the state's separate court of chancery and in the constitutional provision for the popular election, rather than gubernatorial appointment, of the judges of the superior courts.[28] In 1847, Allen gave serious consideration to running for governor. During this same period, as a militant member of the New Jerusalem Church, he promoted and defended Swedenborgianism. In 1847, he delivered a series of lectures on the writings of Swedenborg and even contemplated becoming a traveling minister in the New Church.

Although activity in politics and religion satisfied somewhat his restless nature, Allen's financial status did not improve. Learning in January, 1848, that a land office had been established at Sault Ste. Marie to dispose of the public lands in the copper region, Allen immediately applied for the position of Receiver of Public Lands. The opportunity to become involved once more in the buying and selling of land appealed to Allen, as did the thought of living again on the frontier. He failed to receive the appointment, however, and the year 1849 found him living in the little town of Tecumseh. His son, James C. Allen, had moved to a farm near Tecumseh in 1848, which probably accounts for John's living there. Sometime late in the 1840's, Ann Allen returned to Virginia to live with her son, Thomas McCue. Later she shared the home of her daughter, Sarah, who married Dr. J. A. Waddell of Augusta County in 1848. There Ann remained until her death in 1875.[29]

From a letter written by Allen to Lucius Lyon on December 8, 1849, it appears that the latter, a leading member of the New Church and the occupant of the powerful federal office of Surveyor-General of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, was attempting to aid Allen in finding a position. Allen wrote:

> I have only to say in reference to the proposition, that I could do well in taking charge of the matter as proposed. Still, as I feel at present,

I think I can do better, by going to California. The Lord willing I hope to start in three weeks from Monday next.[30]

That John Allen had decided to join the Gold Rush must have come as no surprise to his friends--they probably considered it remarkable that he had not gone the year before. The possibility of "striking it rich" on a new frontier was precisely the opportunity that John Allen could not ignore.

The Michigan gold-seekers of 1850 faced essentially the same problems as had those of 1849, except that they could benefit from the experiences of the Forty-Niners. Several of the men who left Ann Arbor in 1849 had written letters home during their journey and after their arrival in California.[31] These letters had been published in the local papers, and we can be sure that Allen had read them with care, along with dozens of similar reports in other newspapers of the state. Many of these letters not only contained harrowing accounts of suffering and disaster during the journey (four of Ann Arbor's twelve Forty-Niners had died), but they also contained discouraging reports regarding gold mining itself. Although most of the Argonauts succeeded in finding some gold, few of them found enough to pay their expenses. The publicity given the small number who "struck it rich," however, overshadowed the misfortunes of those who failed. Robert Davidson, who had left Ann Arbor in March, 1849, and arrived in Sacramento on August 15, had reported digging one hundred and fifty dollars' worth of gold during his first three days in California. What Davidson had done, Allen was certain he also could do.

Like other prospective emigrants to California, Allen first had to choose his route. There were three possibilities: to sail around Cape Horn, to strike out across the plains, or to go by way of the Isthmus of Panama. The all-water route was the longest and the slowest--from Boston or New York to San Francisco by schooner often took as long as six months. To the inlander of Michigan, the sea voyage also seemed the most dangerous. Only one of the twelve Forty-Niners from Ann Arbor, Dr. Blackwood, had chosen this route. To go overland was the least expensive, but it was also the most arduous. Of the ten Ann Arborites who had taken this route in 1849, two had died on the way and one had succumbed soon after reaching California. One of the overland survivors, D. T. McCollum, had written from Sacramento: "After a long and perilous journey of 159 days from Independence to this place, I arrived here last Sabbath [October 14], being upwards of five months on the road; suffering hunger and thirst, heat and cold, wet and dry, and at three different times being brought to the borders of the grave."[32]

Allen chose the Panama route, which was the shortest and, if all went according to plan, the quickest. In 1848, a few months before the Gold Rush began, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company had been organized to carry mail and passengers from Panama City to San Francisco. On the Atlantic side, the Atlantic Steamship Company had contracted with the United States Government to operate between New York and Chagres, scheduling the arrival of its vessels to connect with those of the Pacific Mail. Passengers and mail were to be carried by mule and canoe across the Isthmus--a distance of sixty miles--in forty-eight hours or less. Unfortunately, the proprietors of the Pacific Mail had anticipated neither the onrush of passengers nor the problem of desertion among their crews which would result from the discovery of gold in California. Throughout much of 1849, the three steamships operated by the Pacific Mail had been weeks behind schedule, and hundreds of gold-seekers, many of them victims of cholera, dysentery, and yellow fever, had been forced to wait amid the disease and poverty of the ancient city of Panama. Hundreds had died, while hundreds of others, ill and exhausted, had returned home. George Corselius, a prominent Ann Arbor newspaper publisher and close friend of Allen's, had died on

May 10, 1849, while attempting to return home after getting as far as Panama City. By 1850, however, additional vessels had been brought into service, schedules were being kept, and passengers were seldom forced to wait more than a few days in Panama City. For a man no longer in his youth, Allen chose wisely when he settled upon the Isthmus route.

John Allen described his journey with such clarity and detail in his first letter that no commentary is necessary. It will be noted that he left from Tecumseh where he had been living for about a year.

Of the three men who accompanied him, Allen was best acquainted with Abner A. Wells, with whom he became a partner after reaching California. Wells had been a resident of Detroit as early as 1822 and was described as a "hatter" in 1831. By 1839, he was a resident of Ypsilanti Township and held the office of Recorder of Ypsilanti Village in 1841. At the time of his departure for California, Wells was living in Tecumseh. Nothing has been learned of his career in California following Allen's death. Likewise, nothing is known of Wells's brother-in-law, William Wilson, nor of George Van Nest whom Allen described as "a young man."

It will be noted that our last letter from Allen was completed on October 24, 1850. Having given up mining, he and Wells had purchased an acreage five miles from San Francisco and had "commenced our new occupation of gardeners." Displaying his usual faith in the future, he was looking forward to a new and successful career. He confessed that he had been ill, but was better and hoped "to be about in a few days."

Although his family may have received subsequent letters, no further reference to John Allen appeared in the local papers until April 23, 1851, when the Argus reported:

> We have seen a letter received in this city from a gentleman now in California under date of the 5th of March last, which says: "Hon. John Allen lies dangerously ill and is not expected to survive many days."

By the end of April, news of Allen's death had reached Ann Arbor, and on April 30 his obituary appeared in the Argus. It constitutes a fitting close to this sketch of John Allen's career:

> Died--In San Francisco, on the 11th of March last, after a protracted and painful illness, Hon. John Allen, in the 56th year of his age. The deceased was the first proprietor of the land upon which our flourishing city is now built, and may therefore be regarded as the pioneer of our city, and one of the first settlers of the county. He was twice elected to a seat in the Senate of the State, and witnessed this beautiful Peninsula when only the home of the red man of the forest, and seen it teeming with the busy hum of civilization, and occupied by a population of nearly 400,000. Yet, after all, it was his lot to die among strangers. He was a man talented, and has left a numerous circle of friends to lament his loss.

(From the Michigan Argus (Ann Arbor) of June 19, 1850.)

LETTER FROM HON. JOHN ALLEN

The following letter from Hon. John Allen, one of the oldest inhabitants of this village, contains much information which will be of service to those who intend going to the "diggins," besides gratifying to his friends to hear of his safe arrival:

San Francisco, April 30th, 1850.

Messrs. Cole & Gardiner:

In accordance with my promise, I will now endeavor, through your paper, to give to my friends, and the public generally, such information in reference to California, and particularly of a journey from the States to this country, as I have obtained by a short experience here, and on the route.

THE JOURNEY, EXPENCES [sic], &c.

Mr. A. A. Wells, Geo. Van Nest, Wm. Wilson and myself left Tecumseh, Lenawee county, Michigan, on Monday morning, the 7th day of January, with our baggage in an open lumber waggon, which we hired to carry us to Tiffin, O., a distance of 90 miles. This we accomplished in two days of severely cold weather, and in a severe storm most of the distance, at a cost of $4 50 each. On Wednesday morning, at 9 o'clock, we took the cars running from Sandusky to Cincinnati, and at 10 o'clock in the evening of the same day we arrived at the latter place, at a cost of $5 50 each. On Thursday morning we engaged a passage on board the splendid steamboat New Orleans, for New Orleans, advertised to start that afternoon; and after paying 75 cts. for lodging and breakfast at the Rail Road Hotel, near the Levee, we went on board, paying $10 each for our passage in the cabin. We did not however, leave the city until Friday evening. The weather when in Cincinnati, was mild and pleasant, and neither ice or snow to be seen.

On Saturday night the 12th it snowed fast all night, so that in the morning it was 12 inches deep. We had remained tied up all night, on account of the danger to be apprehended from the darkness. On Monday about noon we entered into the Mississippi, the great father of waters, as it is called. After a few hours upon its bosom the snow was no longer to be seen. I will not undertake to describe the romantic and varied scenery upon this beautiful and majestic river. To form any correct idea of it we must see it. Its great width, being in some places six or seven miles--its depth varying from 20 to 100 feet. Its meanderings, which are more than serpentine, and above all, the rapidity of the current, being from five to six miles in an hour, makes it at once a subject of wonder and speculation.

As we approached New Orleans, we found that the river became more and more elevated above the adjacent lands; that to prevent it from flowing out and inundating the whole level country, the inhabitants have thrown up, near the shore, embankments from five to fifteen feet in height, and some eight or ten feet in width on the top. This they call a levee, and which the river in high water, breaks away, or runs over, doing great damage to the cotton and sugar plantations adjoining. To prevent such a catastrophy requires the incessant watchfulness and labor of the planters. This elevation of the river gives it the appearance of a lake on a ridge. Often the buildings behind the levee are entirely concealed, except the roofs, which may be seen from the deck of a steamboat.

We arrived at New Orleans on Sunday the 20th, about noon, having had a very pleasant trip. On the day following we made a contract for our passage to Chagres on the Isthmus, with the captain of the Brig Rogelim at $31 each, and rejoiced to get out of it on any terms. When we were there it was very muddy and very warm. The smell from this mud with a broiling sun upon it, was very offensive to me, as well as to all strangers.

New Orleans is a great place of business, but full of corruption, both moral and physical. Our Brig was advertised to leave on the 23d, which was Wednesday, but we did not get away until Saturday morning the 26th, when we were taken in tow by a tow boat with two other vessels, for the mouth of the river, a distance of 90 miles. On our arrival there the fog was so dense that we could not get over the bar into the gulf until Monday morning. Then a northwest wind set in and blew a perfect gale, and came near blowing us upon the shore, dragging the anchor. We made out to get under way, under full sail, and in a short time we found ourselves riding upon a very rough and angry sea upon the gulf. The scene which soon followed from the sea sickness of fifty passengers on board, I will not attempt to describe. But this much I will say, it was an interesting time for two days and nights. After a variety of calms, blows, trade winds and tacks through the gulf and Caribian sea for fifteen days, we came in sight of the desired haven. On Monday morning the 11th of Feb. we landed in Chagres, a small village of blacks, or natives, of New Grenada, with a sprinkling of Spaniards and a few Americans. On entering the harbor we were perfectly astonished at the sight of the hill sides and valleys, which were covered with a luxurient growth of grass--shrubbery and trees in full dress of green, and bloom and fruit. Here we had unitedly presented to us Spring, Summer and Autumn. The tender bud, the blossom and the fruit, are all to be seen upon the same tree. After a few hours stay there, we hired a native to take us up the Chagres river in a canoe to a place called Gorgona, a distance of 55 miles, at the price of $6 each. It is really, to a lover of the beautiful in nature, worth a trip to this river to see it with its scenery of vines, shrubs, trees, flowers, fruits, birds and animals. No language can paint it. No imagination can conceive anything that approximates to what may be seen and heard there. Here is beauty in great variety for the eye, sweet sounds on every breeze for the ear, an air made richly fragrant to breathe, the richest flavor for the taste, and soft and beautifully covered banks of moss upon which to repose. In brief it is nature's poetry. The beautiful valley is the residence of a barberous [sic] race. Ignorance and indolence reign supremely. We here saw several fine cornfields with corn just in a state to eat green.

We left Chagres about 4 o'clock P.M., on Monday 11th, and arrived at Gorgona on Wednesday 13th, about 3 o'clock P.M.

This is another native village, somewhat larger than Chagres, and said to be more healthy, and 25 miles from Panama. Here we remained all night in our tent, which we pitched for the first time on the bank of the river. Next morning early we contracted with the natives to carry our baggage on their backs to Panama for $50, weighing in all over 800 pounds, being about six cts. per pound. We accompanied them on foot, and found it as much as we wished to do. Ten men divided the whole among them, some carrying 140 lbs. and others not more than 60 lbs. About 9 o'clock we all started over the mountains, resembling an army of stragglers, scattered along a path for many miles.

The ground was dry and fine, and the weather beautiful. We here witnessed the grandeur of mountains and rocks, and noisy rivulets. We carried a cup with us, and every half mile or mile we crossed a brook of good water from the mountains of

which we drank. This road or path was neither steep nor rugged. We stopped and put up all night at the "Half Way House," as it is called, kept by an American. The next morning we started early, and arrived at the ancient city of Panama about two o'clock P.M., in safety of health, and hired a room to put up at 10 cts. per day each, where we deposited our baggage, and spread out our beds to sleep. Our meals we took at the victualing houses in the city, of which there is any number, paying a dime for a cup of coffee, a dime for a roll of good bread, and a dime for a plate of ham, or pork, or beef steak, as we preferred. Thus our two meals a day and lodging did not cost us over a dollar.

Panama is a strange looking place to an American, with its narrow streets and projecting piaza. The houses are all two, and often three stories high, and built of stone, with their thick walls, and tiled roofs. They resemble very much the Swiss barns that project over the first story, and thereby making a shelter on the out side. The windows have neither sash nor glass, on account of the mildness of the climate. The streets are generally about twenty feet wide, and very neatly paved with small round stone, except a space next to the buildings three feet wide, which is generally flat stone. The city proper is enclosed by a thick and high wall, and cannot be entered except through the gates. Monasteries and catholic churches, going to ruin, are standing on every street as monuments of an age which is past. Eating, drinking and gambling houses constitute the principal busines [sic] of the principal street.

The climate here is always warm, and they grow their corn and vegetables during the summer and fall, on account of the want of rain in the winter. The wet season is from the first of May until the 1st of December and the balance of the year it is dry.

There is no season of the year when it is safe to cross the Isthmus, on account of the sickness there, except from the 1st of January to the 1st of April. During the months of January, February and March the weather is fine, the roads good and passable, and but little sickness. But in the summer, or any time during the rainy season, the roads are bad, and sometimes almost impassable, and the heated atmosphere is such that few can pass through it safely.

On Wednesday, Feb. 20, we went on board the ship Brutus, bound for this place, having engaged and paid for our passage the sum of $135 each. On Thursday morning we weighed anchor and started for Tobago, an Island twelve miles off, to obtain water and supplies. Having laid in a supply of these, we set sail for San Francisco on Saturday the 26th, with about 165 passengers on board. We anticipated a quick trip, but it turned out otherwise. We first sailed south across the Equator some 6 or 8 degrees, and then west up to the 120th degree of longitude. Then we started northwest, and sailed up to the 30th degree of latitude. This part of our voyage was performed in a tolerably fair time. But then commenced our troubles. Calms and head winds so retarded our progress that the trip as a whole was rather tedious. Still we are here in good time, for the rivers in the mines are so high, that those who are there ready to work, are at great expenses, doing nothing, waiting for the water to fall. The passengers on the vessel were generally healthy except those who had been imprudent on the Isthmus, eating the tropical fruits. Large fine Oranges at 50 to 60 cents per hundred were a temptation many could not bear. And then the Pine Apples, Bananas, Cocoa, Almonds, &c., exhibited at every step, led many to partake of them too freely. Three men from Alabama who were thus imprudent died on the way, and some others suffered severely.

Our whole trip was a succession of calms and gentle winds. A good canoe would have been a safe conveyance, until we came into latitude 30 north. Nor did we have any wind that even resembled a gale. On Saturday April 20th we came in sight of land on the coast some seventy miles south of this city. From that time we beat up along the coast against a wind dead ahead, and did not make this port until Thursday P.M. the 25th. Often as we neared the coast we could see thousands of cattle on the green and grassy plains which spread out as far as the eye could see. Thus ended a journey occupying a period of nearly four months, at a cost of about $200. We arrived here in good health and spirits, still looking forward to the future.

SAN FRANCISCO

This city is one of great promise, and of great business now. Its population is variously estimated at from 40,000 to 60,000. Nor do I regard these estimates high. The ground, except the streets, which are narrow, is literally covered with buildings and tents for miles in extent, from the water's edge up to the top of hills that resemble mountains. Then there are more than 500 vessels in the bay, hundreds of which are converted into eating houses, taverns and storehouses.

I do not believe that more persons are congregated on the same space of ground in any of our eastern cities. All business is done here with a rush, and upon a large as well as small scale. Ten dollars a day is the price usually paid for a days work, although there are many who work on the streets, for the corporation at five dollars. Carpenters obtain generally $15 and $16 a day. Rent and board are falling. A small house with three rooms for a family can now be obtained for $100 per month, and such last year would have rented for double that sum. Comfortable board and lodgings may now be had for $16 per week.

Provisions are not as high as I expected. Flour per bbl. $12. Pork, mess, $30. Hard bread 10 cts. per lb. Corn $3 to $5 per bushel. Butter $1 25 per lb. Milk 50 cts. per qt. Hams 40 cts. per lb.; Coffee 35 cts. lb.; Beans 10 cts. lb.; Molasses $1 50 per gal.; Rice 10 cts. lb.; Potatoes 37 cts. lb.; Onions 35 do.; Eggs $2 per doz.; Fouls $2 50 ea. Cotton goods are but a trifle higher than in Michigan. Woolen goods are double. Horses, Mules, Oxen, Cows and Sheep are high--six times the price in the states. Beef cattle are not high, say from $40 to $50 per head. Lumber has fallen to $40 per thousand.

We leave here to-morrow morning for Stockton and the mines, and as soon as we have seen the Elephant our friends in Michigan shall be advised as to his appearance. [Note: to "see the elephant" meant to go through an unpleasant experience and get the best of it--or at least come out alive.]

The messenger waits who carries this to Tecumseh, and I have only time to add--my respects to all who feel an interest in our success and welfare.

Yours sincerely, JOHN ALLEN.

P.S.--Any of my friends who may wish to write to me, will direct their letters to Stockton, California. J.A.

(From the Michigan Argus (Ann Arbor), October 9, 1850.)

LETTER FROM HON. JOHN ALLEN

Matsell's Creek, 4 miles from its junction with the Mercedes river at the Horse Shoe Bend, Maraposa County, State of California, July 27th, 1850.

My Dear Mother:

It is now more than six months since I left home for the land of golden hopes, and promises of speedy and certain wealth. Having had some experience in mining, and the life of a miner, I will endeaver [sic] to give you a faithful, as well as a somewhat detailed description of them, hoping, that you have learned from other letters I have written, an account of our journey and its incidents. Mr. A. A. Wells of Tecumseh, Wm. Wilson his brother-in-law, and a young man named Geo. Van Nest, and myself commenced our journey together from the village of Tecumseh on Monday morning, the 7th day of January last, and with as little delay as practicable, we arrived at the Horse Shoe Bend, on the 10th day of May, thus consuming 4 months of the 6 1/2 on our journey and on expenses. On our arrival we pitched our tent among the numerous tents we found there for it was, and is, quite a village of tents, and contains several hundred persons. Here there are miners, tavern-keepers, stores, victualing tents, gambling tents, &c. This village, for so it is called, although there is not a single house in it, and hundreds have no other habitation than the shelter offered by an oak tree, is situated on a small but beautiful plain on the bank of the river, some 40 feet above high water mark, and bounded by high and rugged mountains, covered with a shrub resembling the Cedar. The next day after our arrival, we set out on a "prospecting" tour. That is, we purchased a pick, shovel and tin pan, and commenced our search for gold along the banks of the river and creeks. In this search, which is called "prospecting," when we discovered a place that gold may have been deposited by the current in the present or in past centuries, we got to work with pick axe and shovel among the rocks of all sizes, from tons weight to pebbles, and mixed with clay or sand as the case may be, and dug a "Hole" into the ground, of greater or less depth and extent, according to circumstances, and "green 'uns," as we were, generally dig inefficiently, with ill success. When we have arrived at the point in our hole at which we expect to find the gold, we there commence the difficult and laborious task of "Panning it out." That is, seperating [sic] the stones and dirt from the gold. Gold being heavier than the sand and gravel, will remain at the bottom and may be washed with certain indescribable motions of the pan, and the dexterous use of water. The stones are washed and thrown out with the hands. If no gold, or not a sufficient quantity is found in the bottom of the pan, to justify working the hole thus tried, or as said, "prospected," it is abandoned, and another place tried, and then another, and another, until the hidden treasure is discovered in sufficient quantities to pay for working. Inexperienced miners, frequently spend days and even weeks in prospecting before they can find a place to commence work, such as the case with us. We went up and down the river, and dug hole after hole, and washed pan after pan of dirt, without success. We labored on, and each day if it did not bring us gold, brought us the means of coming a little and a little nearer to it by knowledge gained by experiments. At length we thought we had found a place that wo'd do to work, and purchased a machine for washing, which is in form and size a perfect "baby cradle." The only difference being in a brace across the top in the centre, and a small stub or clete, one inch high, being nailed to the bottom, and about half way from the head to the foot; and the foot being so formed as to let the water, sand and gravel pass out, with another piece across the end about the same height

of that in the centre. Over the head or upper part of this cradle, a square box with sheet iron bottoming, full of holes, made to fit within the ends and sides, is placed, and into this the dirt, stones and gravel are emptied from a pan or pail. The machine or cradle is placed upon a foundation, or pieces of timber, one under each rocker, with the head elevated enough to give a current to the water. This is placed near the edge of the stream, and the man who washes, rocks the cradle with his left hand, and dips water with a common tin dipper with his right and pours upon the contents in the screen or perforated box. The motion and the water soon divides the dirt and small gravel and the gold from the larger stones, which the screen retains and are thrown aside. The dirt passes through upon a wooden slide, so fastened to the sides as to carry the whole of what passes through the screen to the head of the cradle. Here the water and the rocking opperates [sic] to carry the lighter portions over the centre cleet, as well as the cleet at the foot, while the heavier portions, including the gold, are retained above the cletes [sic], and may be taken out and "panned." That is, still further washed, until the gold is left in the bottom clear of all other matter. One man attends the rocker, and one digs the dirt up, and puts it into a pan or pail, to be thence carried to the machine. The labor of digging, as well as of attending the rocker, is of the very hardest kind. No labor of a farm will at all compare with it. At this kind of labor we commenced, and after washing hard all day the first day, we found upon panning out, we had not obtained two dollars a piece [sic]. After trying that hole a few days in hopes that it would improve, we were compelled to go again upon another prospecting tour, to look out for another and a better place, or, in the language of the miners, "one that would pay." Thus we alternately worked and prospected for about two weeks, occupying our tent at night, and cooking ourselves. In one of our prospecting tours we came up to the creek on which we now are, and found that we could do better here than we could on the river. So we shouldered our blankets, tools, cooking utensils and provisions, and set out for this place, packing each of us a heavy pack over a mountain, one of the steepest and most difficult roads, or trails, in all this region; leaving our tent and all unnecessary things behind us in the village to take care of themselves. For we knew not what day we might deem it for our interest to return.

Our camp here for some weeks was an oak tree, our bed a blanket, and our diet, short cake and pork, washed down with water from the creek. Here we continued to work and prospect as we had done upon the river, but with rather better success, as our knowledge and experience increased, but never exceeding five or six dollars a day each. Some days we would be encouraged, and then the next, do nothing but hard work and no pay. And our experience is the experience of all other miners, as well those on this creek and the Nevades [sic] river, as upon every creek and river in the State. For men are passing and repassing, "prospecting" from river to river, and from mine to mine, carrying with them what they have experienced, and reporting their good or ill success. This is the general rule, but to this there are exceptions. Occasionally a man or two men will strike a richer spot than others, and take out hundreds of dollars in a few days. But such strikes, are becoming of very rare occurrence, and the most careful of experienced miners are beginning to estimate half an ounce, (8 dollars) a day, as good luck, or as good pay.

By a rule among miners, a certain number of feet along the stream is allowed to each man. This varies on the different rivers. Here 30 feet was agreed upon, and that is held as a matter of right, and is respected by every man. Beyond that any man has a right to dig, or prospect. Two men who came out with us from Stocton [sic], worked on the creek near us some three weeks ago, and after weeks of ill success and discouragement, fell upon a small spot that yielded them for several days, from 20 to 60 dollars a day between them. We were daily witnesses of their

good fortune, as we worked within forty feet of them. One of these men became home sick, and wanted to sell out his interest in the hole in which they were at work, and without the least suspicion that the place was "worked out," Mr. Wells and myself purchased them out, giving them one hundred dollars for their right. Here we expected to be able to do something, and went to work with renewed energies. But in the good providence of the Lord, who doeth all things well, it was otherwise ordered, and after ten days hard work there, we did not take out more than twenty-five dollars. Thus losing our one hundred dollars, and virtually losing ten days labor, for we could have done much better in our old place. This did not, or has not discouraged us; we know that it was for some good purpose, although we could not, and do not see it. Since that we have purchased another place 80 rods below us, for which we have paid and agreed to pay four hundred dollars; and this we are now working. This spot we hope will remunerate us better and will last us for some time. It is an extensive bar from which several thousand dollars have been taken, and which still prospects rich in many places. In a few days we hope to have this paid for, and to be able to commence making our pile, be the same great or small, as the Lord may see for our good. We have now moved our tent up, and spread pine boughs and bushes around us to keep us from the heat of the sun, which begins to be like the weather of harvest in Michigan--thermometer one hundred and twenty above zero at noon in the shade. Mr. W. and myself are at work together still, and keep house or tent, and when we do a good day's work we obtain an ounce or sixteen dollars between us. This is doing well, and satisfies us. Besides we may fall in with a spot rich enough to give us a still greater amount. This is the character of all bars where gold is deposited. It lies in veins or streaks, and those who persevere through that portion of the bar that pays indifferently will often fall in with streaks that pay well. There are no traits of character, as you will see, so important in a miner as patience and perseverance. Indeed there is no business a man can follow in which there is such constant demand for these qualities, as in mining. There are thousands now in California and on their way, who are doomed to disappointment. Hundreds pass us where we are, who state that they have not been able to pay expenses. As an evidence of this, men may be hired, to work in the mines for two dollars a day and their board. If our bar holds out as we hope it will, we intend to hire some men to work for us at that price.

A miners life is the life of a wanderer. He can have no assurance that the hole that pays him well for his labor today, will pay him for it to-morrow. He dare not, therefore, do any thing by way of permanent improvement, to add to his comfort in his camp, or encumber himself with things that would cost more to carry about with him from place to place than their use is worth. For this season of the year, a man wants, in wearing apparrel [sic], nothing but one pair of pants, two flannel shirts, a pair of heavy shoes, and a straw hat. For bedding--one large blanket, thick, heavy and colored. Grey is the best. For cooking utensels [sic], one small frying pan, for two persons, one tin cup, one tin plate, a spoon and fork, with a jack or sheath knife each. These, with provisions and prospecting tools, two men can pack upon their backs, and find a comfortable home on any spot where night may overtake them. When we first came to the mines, we had such ideas of permanance [sic] that we purchased seeds and planted a garden, and attended it. But this was so late that the dry season--for there has not been one drop of rain or dew since we came, nor will there be any, we are told, until November next--overtook us. Our garden is withering up, and will probably perish before anything comes to perfection, although our corn is in tassel, and our potatoes in blossom, and our beans quite large. We have had radishes twice, which were very fine and tender. The land is rich and would produce abundantly, if it had occasional showers, as in Michigan.

We may have been led into the purchase of the two places mentioned, on account of our disinclination to leave our garden, and yet, it is more than probable that we shall obtain but little from it, except it may be a few small potatoes. Still we cling to the same spot or near it, where we first encamped when we came up the creek, and the providence of the Lord permitting we would be pleased to remain here until winter. Our tent and adjoining arbor are now comfortable, and we have hewn us out of the oaks, a table and a bench, so as no longer to be obliged, as heretofore, to take our meals upon the ground. We now make a cup of coffee for breakfast, and use water for dinner and supper. For meats we have pork, mackerel and fresh beef of an excellent quallity [sic]. Beef steaks are worth 31 1/4 cts per lb., and other pieces 25 cents in the mines. Droves of fat cattle are driven in here and slaughtered, and sold out at these rates. Pork is worth from 30 to 35 cents per lb. Mackerel are worth 30 cents each. We have purchased a bake kettle in which we bake our shortened buiscuit [sic], and pies, as good as I ever ate in the States, the gravy from the pork serving in the place of butter.

When we came to the mines we purchased dried peaches, plums, pairs [sic] and apples, at from 40 to 50 cents per pound. We still have a good supply of these on hand. We treat ourselves occasionally with a dish of boiled beans, or rice, with sugar or molasses. The place where we are we think is perfectly healthy. We are all in perfect health, and have been ever since we came into the mines. The atmosphere cannot be purer. We hang our fresh meat to the limb of a tree this warm weather, and it dries up but does not taint or spoil. We use the water from the creek, which is not cool, but is clear and pure. We have comfortable beds, and sleep sound, with Hector, our dog, at our feet, to look out for the approach of grisly bears, Indians or Mexicans, and to give us warning, a rifle and a shot gun, well charged with bullets and buck-shot, laying our head to our tent pole. My bed is an under-bed I wrapped my bed-clothes in, which I doubled and converted into a sack bottom, and with a frame of oak poles and a cord, I lace it tightly, and then spread a comfortor [sic] over it. This is elevated about a foot from the ground, with a good stone under each corner, and is equal to any French bedstead. There is such a uniformity in the weather here that you may calculate for the weather by day or by night. The days are warm and the nights cool. The wind blows fresh from the Pacific in the afternoon and fore part of the evening, and from the snowy mountains in the latter part of the night and fore part of the day. I am well suited with the climate. It could not be better for health than it is; and if men are unhealthy here it is attributable to their own imprudence and want of care, and not to the climate. Few days have passed since we came to this creek, that we have not been in the water. We laid aside socks long ago, as unnecessary, and as an encumbrance, and put on old shoes to save our feet from sharp stones. Still we have enjoyed perfect health. Nor do I hear of any sickness in the mines, that is not tracable [sic] to the journey thither. These are called the southern mines, and have a reputation of being more healthy than the northern ones, which are said to be richer in gold, but more unhealthy. This influenced me in coming here, preferring health and moderate gains to ill health and great gains.

All our days are spent pretty much after the same fashion, when we are at work and not prospecting. We get up about a half an hour after daylight, and start our fire--cook our breakfast, consisting of boiled, fried or broiled mackerel, or fried pork or beef steak, with shortened buiscuit [sic], cold, a cup of coffee and stewed fruit of some kind. When this is through with, which is a little after sunrise, we commence our work, which is some three rods from our tent, and work from 6 o'clock until 12, then we stop for dinner, which is the same (except the coffee) with a piece of pie for dessert. At 3 o'clock we again go to work, and work until about 7. Then take supper and go to bed. Thus we spend our working days, and at night have

our pay securely put away for future use. We estimate our expenses at about one dollar a day each, and what we obtain more than that, we call clear and as pay for our labor. Eight dollars a day sounds small to the miners of last year, but it is the wages of Congressmen, and we have the chances, tho' now small, it must be confessed, of "making a strike."

We have received no letters from home since our arrival, except one from Mrs. Wells to her husband, dated in April last. The mails from this to that country are badly managed. The blame rests somewhere, and there should be a corrective. I have written to the Argus, Free Press, and to Jas. C. since I arrived here, but whether they have or ever will receive them I know not. This I desire you should give to all my friends in Ann Arbor to read, as I design it for all of them. I have not met with any one from Washtenaw county, nor heard from them. Mr. Wells says he met a man a few weeks ago, who stated that Dr. Blackwood was now on the Suoleme [i.e. Tuolumne] river trading, and that he had spent the past winter at the Maraposa [i.e. Mariposa] mines, 25 miles south of this place. [Note: Dr. Thomas Blackwood, a homeopathic physician in Ann Arbor, had gone to California in 1849.] A man in the mines of California is lost to his friends and to the world, and they to him, except in affection and in thought. These reckon not by time or space, nor do they find a limit. Never more than now, did my spirit seek in affectionate thoughts the objects of their solicitude and regards. Nor do the snowy mountains, or the wide and sterile plains that lie between, stay them in their flight. To know the happiness of being with the beings we love most on earth, we must be separated from them. The good is only known by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. This fruit is pleasant to the eye, or understanding, and is desirable to make one wise. Nor can such wisdom be obtained in any other way. We never can know what is truly good, unless we experience in some form its opposite evil. You caution a child in vain that has never been burnt, against the fire. Truth can only be seen in the mirror of the human mind--where it stands beside its opposite falsity. So it is with that which is good. The affections can know no good, or rather feel and realize nothing as good, that has not had its opposite evil once in possession--these, and the bitter consequences, or fruits, been tasted in the life. To know that a certain affection is founded in selfishness, and that our actions predicated thereupon are to gratify this affection, is wisdom. A child may be innocent, but cannot be wise. It must first partake of the forbidden tree, and from its fruit learn from experience to know what is evil, that it may hate it, and shun it, and what is good, that it may cleave to it and love it.

Thousands never will have fully eaten of the fruit of this tree, until they visit California.

The blessings of an orderly state of civil and religious society, and of social intercourse--the comforts of a well regulated household and family with necessaries, and even luxuries as an every day occurrence, cannot be seen and felt in their constant enjoyment. They must be forsaken, and be lost for a time before they can or will be appreciated. This is the bitter reflection of hundreds and thousands who are now here and on their way. But it is all for good. He who suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground, and who numbers the very hairs of our head, will He not care for, even the least and most unworthy of His creatures? He will, and will so provide all things, as that their greatest good will be promoted thereby. He knows we are but dust, and e'er we can and will rise therefrom, and live and reign with Him, we must suffer many things. For it is only through much tribulation that we are to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Patience to endure and to suffer, must have her perfect work, before we can obtain the peace of the Lord. To fret and be troubled about many things, as was Martha, is not a good state to be in, and we

should be constantly in the effort to resist such feelings, and to be patient in every trial. For if we are tried, it is for the purpose of giving us an opportunity of resisting the temptation, and of conquering this enemy to our peace. But if we indulge in a spirit of discontent, or of resentment, or any other feeling that disturbs our peace, then we have fallen into temptation and a snare. The Lord preserve us, and keep us in all our ways, and direct us to the truth, and to a life of obedience thereto. Amen.

Aug. 2d. -- Since writing the above we have had better success than we have had since we came to the mines. Each day for many days our labor has been rewarded by an increased amount; so that it amounted to 28 dollars, or 14 dollars each, the day before it was $12, and the day before that $11, &c. This looks encouraging, if it continues; but it may fail us in the same way. We have paid up the ballance [sic] due for our hole or bar, and have now on hand about $75, and provisions to last us several weeks, with all necessary tools to work successfully. When we arrived at the mines with a small stock of provisions and purchased tools to work with at California prices, we had not twenty dollars left. We have now for the first time fairly commenced our pile, and if the Lord permits, we hope to continue to enlarge it, until we are prepared to leave for home. Accounts arrived here last week of rich mines on the east side of the snowy range of the Siera Navada [sic] Mountains, and some ten of us united and sent out a man with a company just going there, to prospect for us, and if, on his return, accounts are as favorable as they are now, we shall leave here for that place, and spend the winter there. The distance is estimated at from 260 to 300 miles. We are, however, disinclined to leave here, unless we go upon information the most reliable.

Last night our camp was visited for the first time to our knowledge, by the grisley [sic] bear, and kept Hector in a tumult all the fore part of the evening. We did not see them, but their tracks are plenty in the dust of the trail near by this morning, and a small one was killed about a mile from here, by some men lying in wait for them, having thrown the offal of a beef in the bushes to tempt them out. A jack was killed by them a few days ago, and they treed some men the night before last near here. Still there appears to be no danger from them as it is generally understood that if you will let them alone they will let you alone, besides, they are afraid of a dog, and will not go where one is unless they are wounded. I have more fears from Indians and Mexicans than I have from the animals.

The legislature of this state last winter, passed a law which imposes a tax of twenty dollars per month upon all foreigners for working in the mines. The Mexicans here are very numerous, and are disinclined to pay this tax, and recently refuse to do so, bidding defiance to the authorities. The collector had an encounter with some fifty or sixty of them three days ago, and they fired upon him and the four men he had with him as he was taking from them their mules. This resulted in a general battle in which two of Mexicans were killed and several wounded. Two men were also found dead in the same place, about the same time, having been killed either by the Mexicans or Indians, or both. Murders are now of frequent occurrence--followed by robbery of a man's gold. Every man goes armed to teeth, with gun, pistols and knife. The miners are beginning to disarm all foreigners, and Mexicans in particular. This is a good movement, and I hope will be carried out thoroughly. Some miners are leaving on account of danger, and others are taking their places, not apprehending danger. We have not as yet seen or heard any thing to alarm us from our hole. We are 1 1/2 miles from any other miners, and 4 miles from the village at the Horse Shoe Bend, and a high mountain between us. We are men of peace and hope to be able to live in the peacable [sic] possession of our present possessions until we are disposed to leave them.

We will endeavor to be prudent and cautious in avoiding danger, and then rely upon the Lord, so to protect us that we may be permitted to serve Him longer upon the earth, "nevertheless, thy will not mine be done, O Lord."

There are two things in the life of a miner that are distasteful to me--mixing up bread, and washing clothes. Mr. W. has kindly taken the former to do, and I bake it; and the latter I still perform myself, though at great labor, and not very well, even then. I first tried washing with a pan, and rubbing with my hands, standing over the pan, with soap and cold water. I then tried being seated, and now I take a smooth stone between my legs, seated upon another, in the creek, my feet in the water, and after having soaked the clothes in water, I rub soap upon the wrists and collars and rub them a little, and then double them up upon my stone and with another smaller stone, use both hands in pounding them, applying water to them constantly, with a dipper, from the brook. I thus remove the dirt, but the greese I cannot get out, and therefore leave it in. Yesterday, besides doing my days work, I did at resting time at noon, four week's washing in this manner, viz: four shirts, one towel, and one pair of pants.

There are many incidents in the miner's life that wo'd be interesting to those who are occupied in quiet and peacable [sic] employments, if I could paint them for you in the language of poetry. But this I cannot do, nor will I attempt it. It is a state of constant excitement. For when disappointment crosses the path of a true miner, he does not lie down under it, but rallies his strength for a new enterprise. Hope takes the place of despondency, and it is "hope on, hope ever." The dark and almost impassable gulch and Kenyon [sic] are penetrated--recesses where the sun never shone and the foot of man never trod, are sought out, critically examined and prospected, by the most intrepid and daring of our number. To scale the perpendicular wall of a deep Kenyon [sic], where a river has worn for itself a channel through the solid rock of a high mountain--to swim rivers--turn the channel of water courses--lie on the ground in the open air, and eat shortcake and pork are every day occurrences. A hardier and more daring set of men were never congregated in any part of the world, than are to be found in the mines of California. A man who is not able to endure exposures, and perform hard labor, and do so patiently and perseveringly, has no business here as a miner, and all other business has been overdone by the many hundreds who come here to mine, and leave it on account of unfitness for such business, seeking employment in other channels of industry.

Remember me affectionately to all my friends and believe me, yours ever in dutiful affection as a son,

JNO. ALLEN.

(From the Michigan Argus (Ann Arbor), January 8, 1851.

LETTER FROM HON. JOHN ALLEN

Matsells Creek, 4 miles from its mouth, where it empties into the Mercedes (pronounced Mar-say,) river, at a place called "Horse Shoe Bend," Maraposa County, State of California, August 10th, 1850.

My Dear Friend:-- [to whom this letter was written is not known]

I will now write to you, in fulfillment of my promise, when I last saw you, as well as on account of the pleasure it affords me to do so.

By the mercy of the Lord, I am in good health, and my mind at peace, reposing itself upon the Lord, who hath, and who will do all things well. I hope that e'er this, you have learned much, as to our journey, and of the country, from letters which I have written for the Free Press [of Detroit] and Michigan Argus, for the benefit of all Michigan friends and acquaintances, who feel any interest in myself, or in this truly interesting country. Much had been told to me, and I had read many letters written from here to the States, but I had no correct views of the country, or of the mines. Nor do I hope for any better success in any description I may give you, or others, thro' my letters.

The opinion of many to the contrary notwithstanding, I have no hesitation in venturing the prediction, that California is destined to become a great and a wealthy state. Nor do I predicate this opinion upon its agricultural resources and advantages, for these I regard as somewhat limited. Still, by proper selections, of land upon the low valleys, and other places where irrigation may be introduced, these are, and will, I think, be sufficient for the wants of the country.

Here may be found every variety of soil from the richest bottom lands to the light sandy plains. Experiments are being made by good farmers from the states, and the question will soon be fully settled as to its capacity for raising wheat. In reference to oats, barley and potatoes, there is no question. These may be raised, and are raised, in quantity and quality, superior to any production of the states. If wheat can be raised also, as successfully, then the agricultural advantages of this state will be far above that of any other state in our great republic. For let it always be borne in mind, that there is no winter here, to consume a quarter or half, or the whole, (as is sometimes the case in other states) of what a farmer can raise, through the summer.

Other advantages being equal, this alone, gives great preponderence [sic] in the scale in favor of California.

Water is both plenty and scarce here. Large rivers are numerous and durable, and small streams, during the rainy season. But during the dry season, many of these latter, become almost entirely dry, and others retaining water only in the deepest places. Shallow, or midling shallow wells, however, may be used to supply any deficiency which may exist in this particular.

The want of timber for fencing and building, is quite a serious objection, as I regard it, although it is plenty upon the bottom lands, and upon the mountains. Yet there is a vast tract of country lying between the coast mountain, as it is

called, though 15 or 20 miles therefrom, and the Hills of the Siera Nevada range, that is nearly destitute of any timber. There are few scattering oaks, bordering the numerous rivers that flow from the mountains to the centre of this great valley. There are, however, thousands and thousands of acres lying between these rivers, without one single tree or shrub, of any kind, upon them. Vast prairies exist between the rivers, extending from river to river, (20 miles) and from the great river, the Sanjoaquin [sic] (pronounced San-walk-eene) to the hilly range of the mountain, of equal extent. Oak trees, and they are very few, and often with bodies of but a few feet in length, are all the timber that these praries [sic] afford.

This objection, I am informed, does not hold in reference to the best agricultural districts of the state, lying between the coast mountain and the coast.

Here the valleys are not so wide and the hills and small mountains, better covered with timber. There is no brush here, in any direction, until you enter the mountains, and here, it is litterally [sic], on many of the ranges, nothing but brush and they so thick as to be almost impassible, even to a grisley [sic] bear.

Vast prairies and sparse oak plains, gently undulating, characterizes a large tract of this country, as far as I have seen it. Hills, bordering the mountains, that it would do to call mountains, are often entirely destitute of either trees or bushes.

California is truly one vast clover field, where cattle, sheep, horses, mules, elk and antelope, may live and keep fat through the whole year, and domestic animals require no attention, but to see that they do not become wild, and thus useless. It is, therefore, destined to become the greatest wool-growing, cattle and horse raising, and butter and cheese making countries [sic] upon the globe.

On the first of May, the time when we arrived here, and the time when cattle, sheep, and all animals not highly fed with grain, in the other states, are poor and half starved, we found all animals not made poor by work, as fat as could be, ranging over the plains and prairies, among the flowers and grasses, where mowers could cut, and were cutting, two tons of good hay to the acre. Nor could it be called wild hay, but "tame," as it is termed in Michigan.

There are three varieties of wild clover and a grass resembling our timothy, which make excellent pasture as well as excellent hay. This grass is all ripe by the middle of May, and then begins to dry with the dry season, and cures as we do our best hay, without dew or rain, and remains upon the ground, instead of the labor of cutting, curing and barning and afterwards feeding out. And here, it retains its strength and sweetness thro' the entire dry season, if not burnt up with the fires which break out or are set in it by passers by. All animals eat this dried grass or hay with avidity, and will grow fat upon it, and it is really better for those that work, than when green.

Thus you see the order of things in this world of grasses and flowers, is changed. Winter, here, is the time to grow the grass, and to bring out the leaves upon the trees, and summer makes or dries it into hay, for use through this season of drought, and dries up the leaves upon the trees and bushes, so that they fall when the rains commence, and new ones take their place.

The valleys of the mountain ranges here, will in time become the pastures of herdsmen and shepherds. For here, where we are, are vast plains of hills and valleys, bordering the stream we are upon, and capable of sustaining through winter

and summer large numbers of animals. But I will explain what I mean by "mountain ranges." The Siera Nevada is not one great elevation descending from its summit east and west by a gradual descent, to the plain or valley, but it is a succession of mountains running parallel to the centre or principal range, and each successive range diminishing in size, until it becomes a small hill, and then, commence the plains. There are probably, some 25 or 30 of these mountains to be crossed before you reach the snowy mountains, or principal range, each succeeding one, as you approach the principal range, being a little higher than its predecessor. These ranges are nearly north and south, NNW by SSE, probably. The principal rivers head in the snowy range and cut through these parallel ranges at a line generally at right angles therewith, occasionally passing several miles between two of them, and thus meandering their way, sometimes running south and sometimes north.

The smaller streams which rise within these ranges, generally run between them, to the principal rivers, although they occasionally make their way thro' them. The rocky formation, lies in ledges corresponding with the course of the mountains, and may be the cause of their apparently parallel course. We are situated fairly within the mountains, having crossed some six or eight of these ranges, to say nothing of the hills we crossed, as we approached the great range, and still we are some fifty miles travel, if not seventy, from the snow, on the top of the principal range. Some of the valleys between these mountains are extensive and beautiful, and are the residence of numerous Indian tribes denominated Root Diggers, most of whom are wild and timid, at the approach of the white man.

I do not, as some do, estimate mining in this state as the only thing that can give it permanent wealth and population. On the contrary, I regard it as of little value to the ultimate wealth and prosperity of the country. That it will, and does now greatly facilitate its settlement there can be no doubt. Thousands are tempted here by the gold of the mountains who will remain, or return to settle as stock raisers. Farms already commenced, command higher prices than they do in the oldest settled states. Mining will gradually diminish, as the surface gold diminishes, and the agricultural and cattle and wool interests will increase. Already it is said there are men on the road, with cows, horses, sheep and mules, with families to make permanent settlements here. The advantages presented here for stock and wool-growing cannot be overlooked long, by men engaged therein, in the states.

Thousands will come here to make their fortunes in the mines, who will not be able to return for the want of means. There are many men who have neither the physical nor the mental force to work in the mines, and who are driven into other employments. So numerous have the class become this season, that the price of labor in almost all branches of business has been reduced--since we came into the state--more than one half. Now good men are hired at from two to five dollars a day, and mechanics at that. Merchants, Shop-men, traders, packers, teamsters, and laborers have increased to such an extent, within the last three months, that business is overdone in most branches, and competition, they say, has become ruinous. Many are returning to the mines, to work for a living as a last resort. Here, in this department, every hard and well directed days work will yield some compensation, and some times as high as fifteen dollars a day; and from that down to two. Any man who can, this season, make sure of five dollars a day, as an average for the season may regard himself well off. For many will not and cannot do as well as that. A few, may do better.

As the prospects of mining decreases [sic], the price of living keeps pace with them. Thus the price of every thing, including lots and houses in the towns and villages of this country, will feel the effects of diminished rewards to the miner.

A miner's day's work is the scale to regulate the prices of all things here. While this was estimated at $16, then everything that a day's work would produce in the state was worth the same. Now the scale is altered, and five dollars will become the standard, unless new, and more productive mines are discovered.

Thus as a more healthy state of trade and business takes the place of exagerated [sic] prices for every thing, and men become sobered and in their right minds, they will turn their attention to the vast resources of this state for raising cattle, and growing wool. Should it be asked, where would be the market for wool, cheese, butter, beef, tallow and hides, I would answer, the whole of the Pacific trade is at the door, if necessary, but there will soon be a market at home. Where wool is easily raised, there it will be cheap, and cloth may be manufactured at a cost below that of a country where wool is high. This will tempt the manufacturer here, to erect machinery upon the mountains streams [sic], where water power is abundant. And manufacturing towns will spring up, and furnish a market for butter, cheese, flour, &c. Even if the gold mines should be forgotten, or mentioned only as something that had transpired. All the elements are here, to make a great and wealthy state. Time will develope them. The mines are but the entering wedges to open to us a view of these resources. Let Americans but see this country, and they will settle it, and fill it with its teeming millions of hardy, industrious, and, in coming time, moral and religious people.

The population of the mines and valleys of this country is truly an anomaly. Here are men of all grades in morals, and in all want of morals, all grades of religion and no religion, and from every nation, I believe, upon the globe, all mixed up in business, and in the race to obtain wealth. There is no employment, from obtaining gold by honest and conscientious industry and economy, down to shooting men down like cattle, and robbing them, that does not find men engaged in it. Murders and robberies are occurring every few days, but a short distance from us. There is no value set upon human life here. Gold is the great object which all are seeking, and this must be obtained by those who do not wish to mine for it, by other measures. To hang a man, or shoot one, especially a Mexican, appears a virtue rather than a crime.

A few weeks ago they hung a Mexican for stealing, and refused all redemption, and the day before yesterday, two young Mexicans were shot down, for being found in possession of mules, that their murderers claimed that they had stolen, but which the friends of the men claimed were mules for which a reward of an ounce a piece had been offered to any one who would find them and bring them in, and that these two young men had been in search for them--had found them and were on their way with them to the place of reward, when overtaken by three men, and shot down. The Mexicans of California, and those who come here to mine, and to rob and steal, as is to be feared many do, are passing through a severe ordeal. By a law of last winter, the legislature of this state imposed a tax of twenty dollars per month upon every foreigner who should be found at work in the mines. If they do not pay this, they are liable to be driven away from their place of work, and if any of them are found armed, they are liable to have their arms taken from them.

Society here may truly be regarded as in a state of chaos. Good and Evil--Truth and Falses [sic], from the highest to the lowest, are in a state of conflict here. No truly intelligent and reflecting man can look at this state of things, and not feel deeply, that the Lord alone "who maketh the wrath of man to praise Him" and "who will restrain the remainder," can bring order out of this confusion, and light out of this darkness.

The climate here is truly delightful, through the dry season, and is said to be not unpleasant during the rainy season off from the coast. The heat of the day is not any more oppressive than it is in Michigan, and the nights are always cool and pleasant, so as to require blankets for covering. There is neither fogg [sic] nor dew, and the air is as pure as it can be. You may hang up to the limb of a tree, a piece of fresh beef and it will dry and keep without injury all summer. Thus we keep ours for a week at a time, and it is perfectly good and sweet. Our pork, and salt fish of any kind, we serve in the same way. Miners, generally, have no shelter for the night but their blankets, not even regarding a tree of any value, after sun-down and before sun-rise. In such a climate it must be healthy, and such is the case in all this region. It is very seldom we hear of a sick man, or the death of any one from disease, except in cases of recently arrived persons who come into the mines sick with diseases contracted on their journey.

Animals, wild and domestic, of almost every description, are abundant here. Cattle, mules, asses, horses, sheep, hogs and goats of the domestic kind, and bear, wolves, deer, elk, antelope and panther of the wild species. Elk and antelope go in herds, during the summer, upon the plains and prairies, and winter in the valleys and mountains through the rainy season. The grisley [sic] bear appears to be the most formidable as well as dangerous animal here. No hunter dare shoot at one, unless he is an expert climber and has a suitable tree in close proximity. It is no unusual circumstance for them to drive a straggling miner, or even half a dozen of them at a time, up trees, if their path lies in the way. A few days or evenings ago only, they passed near our tent just after dark, three in number, an old she one and her two cubs. They met near by several persons on the trail, five I believe in number. They all took to trees for safety, and had to remain some time there before their prison keepers left. The next night they threw out, near the camp, one and a half miles from here, into the bushes, the offal of a beef they had just killed, and several persons with guns took their stations in the tops of trees near by, lying in wait for the approach of these animals. They did not, it seems, wait long before the two cubs came, and commenced making a meal upon the beef--the old one remaining behind, or on the watch. These two were fired upon, and one of them killed dead upon the spot, and the other badly wounded, as it crawled off groaning and growling most horribly. The one killed weighed over five hundred pounds when dressed, tho' but a cub, and not half grown. Since that, the old she bear has become very dangerous, attacking and following every one that she meets, or can find, and lies near the place where her cub was killed, or both probably. A man on horseback passed the next day, and the old bear gave chase, and came near taking him from his horse, as she could run up the hills faster than his horse and he could gain but little on the descent.

The day before yesterday, a young man and myself were returning from a prospecting tour, some 20 miles higher up the mountain, or over two of these numerous ranges of mountains, when we came into her bearship's vicinity, and the young man observed that a bear was near, for he could smell it. After making this remark, we kept a look-out for bruin and for her tracks in the wide and dusty trail upon which we were travelling, and soon we found the tracks, coming in the direction to have met us, had we been along a little sooner. We passed on, feeling no danger, having a good dog and a good gun and trees pretty plenty. It had followed the trail, as we found by the tracks for nearly a mile, and on measuring its tracks in the dust we found it twelve inches long and six inches wide. A good hunter would make more money killing these animals and selling their meat to miners, than he could make at mining. They readily sell for 25 cents a pound for the fore quarters and 37 1/2 cents for the hind quarters. Their meat is said to be of an excellent quality,

superior to any beef, and fat. We have not, as yet had a sight of one, and it may be for our good if we do not, while we remain in these mountains.

Hare are very plenty, and are excellent eating. They are about four or five times as large as our rabbits, and resemble them. An old one is about as heavy as a good heavy lamb in the fall, and as good to eat. They are shy and rather difficult to kill.

Birds are very plenty here--Doves and Quails, particularly. I have not seen or heard of the Praire [sic] Hen, Pheasant, called Patridge [sic] by some, nor the wild Turkey.

The Honey Bee has not yet crossed the Rocky Mountains, although this would be a delightful land for them.

Flowers are blooming in the mountains, or in the valleys, through the entire year.

Reptiles are not plenty. We have seen but few snakes. Those we have seen, were the rattle snake, spotted and large, and a calico snake, striped across the back instead of lengthways. We have killed three rattle snakes and one calico snake, and we have been upon the creek and in the placers where such snakes keep themselves, ever since we have been in this country. To have been occupied, on similar ground for the same length of time in Michigan, we should have found more of the venomous reptiles.

Insects have given us but little trouble. Our tent stands within fifteen feet of the bank of the creek, on a low flat piece of ground, and yet, it is seldom we see or hear a mosquito. In truth we have been subject to no annoyance thus far, from man, animals, reptiles or insects of any kind.

Provisions are plenty, though somewhat costly. We pay the following prices now, for what we buy: Flour in bags from Chili, 18 cts per lb., Pork, mess, 37 1/2 cts, Coffee, 50 cts, Sugar, brown, 65 cts, Rice 25 cts, Beans 40 cts, Molasses one dollar per bottle, a little less than a quart; Potatoes 33 cts lb., Dried Apples 62 1/2 cts, Peaches 62 1/2 cts, Mackerel 30 cts each, Fresh Beef 25 cts. Every thing is sold by the pound here, and will appear high to you, as it did at first to me, but I have become more accustomed to the prices and reconciled to them. A man can buy as much, or more, provisions here with the proceeds of a day's work, than he can in Michigan; and this is the true mode of estimating their value.

It costs Mr. Wells and myself about one dollar a day each, or a little less to live, and we live generously and well, though we do not indulge in costly things that are not essential to health. We eat more or less fruit every day, either stewed or in pies, and use molasses as a substitute for butter on our bread in the evening at tea, or cold water, which we use instead of tea. Once or twice a week we have either rice or bean soup. Beaf [sic] steaks at least 5 times a week, and often for 4 days as much as we can eat, and this cooked as it should be.

We work hard every day in the week, Sunday excepted, from 6 in the forenoon until sundown, resting about two hours at noon, and, if warmer than usual, three. We sleep sound and well in an open tent. That is, we stretch our tent over our heads as an awning, and place pine and other bushes on the east, south, and west to keep the sun out, and leave the north open entirely. Thus we have a free circulation of air, either from the sea in the afternoon and fore part of the night, or from the snowy mountain from midnight until nearly noon.

Our success thus far in mining, has been far below our anticipations when we left home. We have been in the mines now over three months, and have not been able to lay up three hundred dollars between us, and we have lost no time comparatively in prospecting, and I deem it safe to state that we have done better than any five out of one hundred that came into the southern mines when we did.

I see hundreds every week, that state positively that they have not in that time laid up one cent. They work at low rewards, that is, in holes not yielding much gold, only when out of money, and then start on a tour to find a better place, until that is all spent, and then go to work again. This is true of thousands, that I see and hear from in this part of the mines.

We worked week after week when we first came here, and did not lay up 30 dollars a week. But we did not like to be going after every report we heard, and would wait and let those that were younger go, and soon they would return and go to work at their old places. I would not have it understood that we have not taken from the mines three hundred dollars, over our daily expenses, for we have purchased out three companies on the creek and used up our means in that way, and are only now, for the first time beginning to receive some return for our outlay. We paid $75 to one company for their hole, that we lost entirely, not having been able to get any thing from it. They had worked it out and concealed the fact from us, though within 50 feet of where we were at work daily. The next purchase we made was the bar on which we are now at work, which was owned by two separate companies. We contracted with one for their part of the bar for $400, and with the other for theirs at $50. We have now paid up from gold mostly taken from the bar. At one time we feared we had thrown away this money also, but it is now paying us well for our labor, and we hope to be able to remain here in profitable labor until winter, or until the rainy season commences.

During the past week we averaged twelve dollars and fifty cents for each day's work, and on the last day of the week, Saturday, we took out between us $43. This was by far the best day's work we have done. If we are able through the ballance of the season, to lay up an ounce a day between us, or $100 a week, which we hope to do, we shall feel that we have made a good purchase; for not many miners in this quarter can do as well. Still we know not what the Providence of the Lord will be in our behalf. If prosperous, we will strive to be grateful and humble; if, otherwise, confiding and submissive--"His will be done."

A little more than two weeks ago, a report came to the miners here, that new and very rich mines had been discovered on the east side of the snowy range, and not far from where the emigrant's trail crosses the mountains. Imediately [sic] great numbers started and left their places here. But we did not like to start on so long and expensive a journey, upon so uncertain an account. So, some ten or twelve of us agreed with one of the men who did go, that if he found the mines there as rich as represented, and would return and give us notice immediately, and pilot us in, that we would give him twenty-five dollars each, on our arrival there, and on our finding things as represented, and that we would aid him in raising a company of 40 or 50 men who would also go at a similar price. But, if the report proves false, he is to return and inform us of that, and in such case we are to make him a compensation of twenty dollars between us. He is to be here in about two weeks from this time. This may change all our calculations for the fall and winter.

San Francisco, Oct. 24, 1840 [i.e. 1850]

A long time has elapsed since I wrote the above. Our hole gave out much sooner than we had anticipated, and we being also worn out in a great degree with hard work, concluded to leave the mines and mining, and seek employment in some other channel of industry. We accordingly, with the small amount we had laid up, set out for this place on the 14th of last month, and arrived here on the 23d.

After remaining two days, we met with an opportunity of purchasing a garden, out of the city about 5 miles, with twenty acres within it and sixteen of it ploughed, and some 6 or 7 that had been and was in vegetables, such as cabbages, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, lettuce, raddishes [sic] and kale, and on the 25th we commenced our new occupation of gardeners and bringing to market such things as we had that were marketable. Our enterprise, thus far, has been more successful than we had anticipated. Three of us made the purchase, and paid one thousand dollars down, and agreed to pay fifteen hundred dollars more, on or before the first day of November, being but a few days over a month. We still have one week of our time unexpired, and we have paid from the receipts of our garden thirteen hundred dollars, leaving us only two hundred more to raise in this week, and in addition to this sum we paid our expenses and purchased a span of horses at $130 from the proceeds also. We intend immediately to add fowls and cows to our other business so as to sell eggs and milk, which is worth 6s per quart, and eggs $4 per dozen. My health has not been very good for some days, having a somewhat severe attack of the dysentery, now prevailing here, The cholera is also in the city. I am some better to day, and hope, the Lord permitting, to be about in a few days.

I wish all my letters and papers directed for the present to San Francisco.

JOHN ALLEN

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

NOTES

1. John Allen to Lucius Lyon, December 8, 1849, Lucius Lyon Papers, William L. Clements Library.

2. John Allen to Jane Trimble, February 20, 1825, photostat, John Allen Papers, Michigan Historical Collections of the University of Michigan; original in the Robert H. Schoen Collection.

3. J. Marshall McCue to Samuel H. Kerr, March 4, 1888, photostat in John Allen Papers, Michigan Historical Collections. Original was owned by Elizabeth Barry Kerr of Washington, D.C., in 1925.

4. A number of writers on Ann Arbor's history have stated that Allen and Rumsey met in Cleveland, although both James C. Allen (Portrait and Biographical Album of Washtenaw County, Michigan, Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1891, p. 191) and J. Q. A. Sessions (Michigan Pioneer Collections, I (1877), 333) gave Detroit as the meeting place. A letter from William Williams to Allen written in Buffalo on February 15, 1824, (John Allen Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit) clearly indicates that Allen went from Buffalo to Detroit by way of Canada. Elisha Walker Rumsey was born in Sharon, Connecticut, on November 24, 1785, and was thus 10 years Allen's senior. He had spent most

of his youth in Hubbardton, Vermont, and had moved to Bethany in Genesee County, New York, in 1818. He died in Ann Arbor on September 5, 1827.

5. John Bryan, "Detroit Thirty Years Ago," Washtenaw Whig (Ann Arbor), March 22, 1854; reprinted from the Detroit Advertiser.

6. Ibid. These commissioners, all Detroiters, were: A. E. Wing, Richard Smyth, Thomas Rowland, Shubael Conant, Thomas C. Sheldon, James McCloskey, and J. L. Leib. Bryan was able to be specific regarding the dates in February, 1824, when he met Allen and the Commissioners because his son, Alpha Washtenaw Bryan, was born on February 27, 1824; he was informed by the Commissioners on February 28 of the child's birth.

7. []"Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Examine the County of Washtenaw"[], Detroit Gazette, March 26, 1824.

8. "Uncle John Says So," Ann Arbor Register, June 3, 1886. In a letter to the editor which appeared under "Correspondence," in the Peninsular Courier (Ann Arbor) of April 8, 1870, John Geddes stated that he arrived in Detroit on July 12, 1824, went almost immediately to Woodruff's Grove, and on July 16 visited Ann Arbor. "We arrived in Ann Arbor before night," he recalled. "Ann Arbor then had one house; a sort of frame, one story high. There was an additional log block house, one story and a half high, no rafters nor roof on it. There was a tent north of the house. John Allen was putting up in the tent. Elisha W. Rumsey and wife occupied the house, and entertained persons who came viewing land. It was headquarters. These beginnings were near a brook on Huron street. Rumsey and his wife set up there in February, 1824, and may be set down as the first housekeepers of Ann Arbor Township and City."

9. Mrs. George C. Lathrop, "Washtenaw Co. in 1828," Ann Arbor Register, February 16, 1893, p. 7. (Reprinted from the Stockbridge []Michigan[] Sun.)

10. This advertisement, dated June 1, 1824, first appeared in the Detroit Gazette on June 4, 1824. It appeared for the last time in the issue of August 27, 1824.

11. John Allen to John R. Williams, September 18, 1824, John R. Williams Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

12. John Allen to Jane Trimble, February 20, 1825, photostat, John Allen Papers, Michigan Historical Collections.

13. []Lorenzo Davis[], "The Olden Time," Ann Arbor Argus, January 25, 1884. (Although this is signed simply "D", it is apparent from later articles in the same series that Davis was the author.)

14. John Allen to James C. Allen, June 12, 1836, John Allen Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

15. Robert Benaway Brown, ed., "Karl Neidhard's Reise nach Michigan," Michigan History, XXXV (March, 1951), p. 64.

16. Agreement between Edward Brooks and John Allen, dated July 28, 1836, John Allen Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

17. The Amherst capitalists with whom Allen was associated were Lucius Bottwood and Luke Sweetser. Many papers pertaining to the Richmond Company are among the John Allen Papers in the Burton Historical Collection.

18. Elizabeth Tate Allen to Elizabeth M. C. Allen, July 22, 1836, John Allen Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

19. Article of Agreement between John Allen and Oliver Kane, March 3, 1837, John Allen Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

20. John Allen to William Woodbridge, July 16, 1838, William Woodbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

21. Elizabeth M. C. Allen to James C. Allen, July 16, 1838, John Allen Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

22. John Allen to William Woodbridge, February 9, 1839, William Woodbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

23. Ann I. Allen to Thomas McCue, June 9, 1841, John Allen Papers, Michigan Historical Collections.

24. Same to same, August 15, 1842, John Allen Papers, Michigan Historical Collections.

25. Ibid.

26. Elizabeth Fries Ellet, Pioneer Women of the West. New York: Scribner, 1852. p. 382. (In her introduction, p. vii, Mrs. Ellet stated that Mary H. Clark had supplied most of the "sketches illustrative of Michigan.")

27. The Church activities of Allen and other Michigan converts to Swedenborgianism are described in the Rev. George Field's Memoirs, Incidents & Reminiscences of the Early History of the New Church (Toronto: R. Carswell, 1879). Although he became interested in Swedenborg as early as 1844, Allen was not baptized until February 5, 1847 (p. 181).

28. For a detailed record of Allen's role in Michigan's judicial reform, see Clark F. Norton's "Judicial Reform in Michigan Between Two Constitutions, 1835-1850" (Michigan Law Review, LI (1952) 203-60). Dr. Samuel Denton, also a senator from the Second District, worked closely with Allen.

29. Writers on Ann Allen have generally assumed that she returned to Virginia following the death of John Allen in 1851. This is disproved by the fact that when the 1850 census was taken of Augusta County, Virginia, she was listed as living with her daughter, Sarah, on August 13, 1850. Sarah was living in Augusta County as early as the summer of 1847. In a letter to her father dated November 23, 1847, she related her plans for marriage (this letter is in the John Allen Papers, Burton Historical Collection). Sarah Allen and Dr. J. A. Waddell were married on January 20, 1848. It is the present writer's conviction that Ann Allen had returned to Virginia with Sarah as early as the summer of 1847.

30. John Allen to Lucius Lyon, December 8, 1849, Lucius Lyon Papers, Clements Library.

31. See the present writer's Letters Home: The Story of Ann Arbor's Forty-Niners (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1960).

32. Michigan Argus (Ann Arbor), December 19, 1849; also the Washtenaw Whig (Ann Arbor), December 26, 1849.